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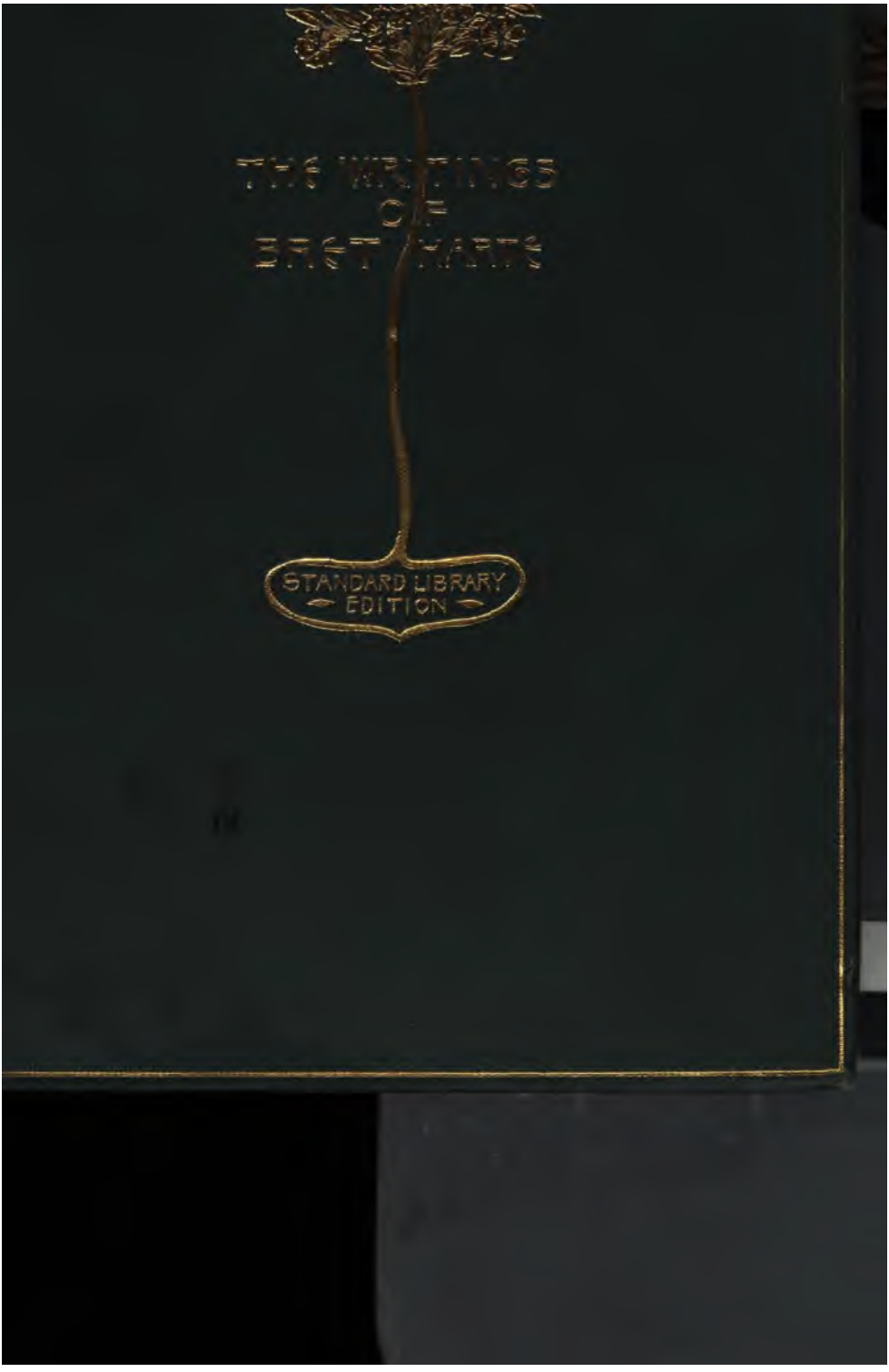
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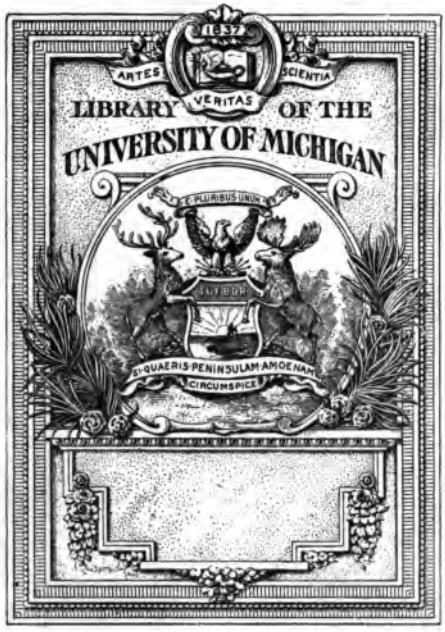
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THE WRITINGS OF
BRET HARTE

WITH INTRODUCTIONS, GLOSSARY, AND INDEXES

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAVURES

VOLUME XVIII

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Here is the treasure I am seeking

The Writings of Bret Harte

STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

HOUCHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

A TREASURE OF THE REDWOODS

AND OTHER TALES

BY

BRET HARTE

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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A TREASURE OF THE REDWOODS, AND OTHER TALES

A TREASURE OF THE REDWOODS

PART I

MR. JACK FLEMING stopped suddenly before a lifeless and decaying redwood-tree with an expression of disgust and impatience. It was the very tree he had passed only an hour before, and he now knew he had been describing that mysterious and hopeless circle familiar enough to those lost in the woods.

There was no mistaking the tree, with its one broken branch which depended at an angle like the arm of a semaphore; nor did it relieve his mind to reflect that his mishap was partly due to his own foolish abstraction. He was returning to camp from a neighboring mining town, and while indulging in the usual day-dreams of a youthful prospector, had deviated from his path in attempting to make a short cut through the forest. He had lost the sun, his only guide, in the thickly interlaced boughs above him, which suffused through the long columnar vault only a vague, melancholy twilight. He had evidently penetrated some unknown seclusion, absolutely primeval and untrodden. The thick layers of decaying bark and the desiccated dust of ages deadened his footfall and invested the gloom with a profound silence.

As he stood for a moment or two, irresolute, his ear, by

this time attuned to the stillness, caught the faint but distinct lap and trickle of water. He was hot and thirsty, and turned instinctively in that direction. A very few paces brought him to a fallen tree; at the foot of its upturned roots gurgled the spring whose upwelling stream had slowly but persistently loosened their hold on the soil, and worked their ruin. A pool of cool and clear water, formed by the disruption of the soil, overflowed, and after a few yards sank again in the sodden floor.

As he drank and bathed his head and hands in this sylvan basin, he noticed the white glitter of a quartz ledge in its depths, and was considerably surprised and relieved to find, hard by, an actual outcrop of that rock through the thick carpet of bark and dust. This betokened that he was near the edge of the forest or some rocky opening. He fancied that the light grew clearer beyond, and the presence of a few fronds of ferns confirmed him in the belief that he was approaching a different belt of vegetation. Presently he saw the vertical beams of the sun again piercing the opening in the distance. With this prospect of speedy deliverance from the forest at last secure, he did not hurry forward, but on the contrary coolly retraced his footsteps to the spring again. The fact was that the instincts and hopes of the prospector were strongly dominant in him, and having noticed the quartz ledge and the contiguous outcrop, he determined to examine them more closely. He had still time to find his way home, and it might not be so easy to penetrate the wilderness again. Unfortunately, he had neither pick, pan, nor shovel with him, but a very cursory displacement of the soil around the spring and at the outcrop with his hands showed him the usual red soil and decomposed quartz which constituted an "indication." Yet none knew better than himself how disappointing and illusive its results often were, and he regretted that he had not a pan to enable him to test the soil by washing it at the spring. If there were

only a miner's cabin handy, he could easily borrow what he wanted. It was just the usual luck, — "the things a man sees when he has n't his gun with him!"

He turned impatiently away again in the direction of the opening. When he reached it, he found himself on a rocky hillside sloping toward a small green valley. A light smoke curled above a clump of willows; it was from the chimney of a low dwelling, but a second glance told him that it was no miner's cabin. There was a larger clearing around the house, and some rude attempt at cultivation in a roughly fenced area. Nevertheless, he determined to try his luck in borrowing a pick and pan there; at the worst he could inquire his way to the main road again.

A hurried scramble down the hill brought him to the dwelling, — a rambling addition of sheds to the usual log cabin. But he was surprised to find that its exterior, and indeed the palings of the fence around it, were covered with the stretched and drying skins of animals. The pelts of bear, panther, wolf, and fox were intermingled with squirrel and wildcat skins, and the displayed wings of eagle, hawk, and kingfisher. There was no trail leading to or from the cabin; it seemed to have been lost in this opening of the encompassing woods and left alone and solitary.

The barking of a couple of tethered hounds at last brought a figure to the door of the nearest lean-to shed. It seemed to be that of a young girl, but it was clad in garments so ridiculously large and disproportionate that it was difficult to tell her precise age. A calico dress was pinned up at the skirt, and tightly girt at the waist by an apron — so long that one corner had to be tucked in at the apron string diagonally, to keep the wearer from treading on it. An enormous sunbonnet of yellow nankeen completely concealed her head and face, but allowed two knotted and twisted brown tails of hair to escape under its frilled cape behind. She was evidently engaged in some culinary

work, and still held a large tin basin or pan she had been cleaning clasped to her breast.

Fleming's eye glanced at it covetously, ignoring the figure behind it. But he was diplomatic.

"I have lost my way in the woods. Can you tell me in what direction the main road lies?"

She pointed a small red hand apparently in the direction he had come. "Straight over thar — across the hill."

Fleming sighed. He had been making a circuit of the forest instead of going through it — and this open space containing the cabin was on a remote outskirt!

"How far is it to the road?" he asked.

"Jest a spell arter ye rise the hill, ef ye keep 'longside the woods. But it 's a right smart chance beyond, ef ye go through it."

This was quite plain to him. In the local dialect a "spell" was under a mile; "a right smart chance" might be three or four miles farther. Luckily the spring and outcrop were near the outskirts; he would pass near them again on his way. He looked longingly at the pan which she still held in her hands. "Would you mind lending me that pan for a little while?" he said half laughingly.

"Wot for?" demanded the girl quickly. Yet her tone was one of childish curiosity rather than suspicion. Fleming would have liked to avoid the question and the consequent exposure of his discovery which a direct answer implied. But he saw it was too late now.

"I want to wash a little dirt," he said bluntly.

The girl turned her deep sunbonnet toward him. Somewhere in its depths he saw the flash of white teeth. "Go along with ye — ye 're funnin'!" she said.

"I want to wash out some dirt in that pan — I 'm prospecting for gold," he said; "don't you understand?"

"Are ye a miner?"

"Well, yes — a sort of one," he returned, with a laugh.

"Then ye'd better be scootin' out o' this mighty quick afore dad comes. He don't cotton to miners, and won't have 'em around. That 's why he lives out here."

"Well, I don't live out here," responded the young man lightly. "I should n't be here if I had n't lost my way, and in half an hour I 'll be off again. So I 'm not likely to bother him. But," he added, as the girl still hesitated, "I 'll leave a deposit for the pan, if you like."

"Leave a which?"

"The money that the pan 's worth," said Fleming impatiently.

The huge sunbonnet stiffly swung around like the windsail of a ship and stared at the horizon. "I don't want no money. Ye kin git," said the voice in its depths.

"Look here," he said desperately, "I only wanted to prove to you that I 'll bring your pan back safe. Now look! If you don't like to take money, I 'll leave this ring with you until I come back. There!" He slipped a small specimen ring, made out of his first gold findings, from his little finger.

The sunbonnet slowly swung around again and stared at the ring. Then the little red right hand reached forward, took the ring, placed it on the forefinger of the left hand, with all the other fingers widely extended for the sunbonnet to view, and all the while the pan was still held against her side by the other hand. Fleming noticed that the hands, though tawny and not over clean, were almost childlike in size, and that the forefinger was much too small for the ring. He tried to fathom the depths of the sunbonnet, but it was dented on one side, and he could discern only a single pale blue eye and a thin black arch of eyebrow.

"Well," said Fleming, "is it a go?"

"Of course ye 'll be comin' back for it again," said the girl slowly.

There was so much of hopeless disappointment at that

prospect in her voice that Fleming laughed outright. "I 'm afraid I shall, for I value the ring very much," he said.

The girl handed him the pan. "It 's our bread pan," she said.

It might have been anything, for it was by no means new; indeed, it was battered on one side and the bottom seemed to have been broken; but it would serve, and Fleming was anxious to be off. "Thank you," he said briefly, and turned away. One of the hounds barked again as he passed; he heard the girl say, "Shut your head, Tige!" and saw her turn back into the kitchen, still holding the ring before the sunbonnet.

When he reached the woods, he attacked the outcrop he had noticed, and detached with his hands and the aid of a sharp rock enough of the loose soil to fill the pan. This he took to the spring, and, lowering the pan in the pool, began to wash out its contents with the centrifugal movement of the experienced prospector. The saturated red soil overflowed the brim with that liquid ooze known as "slumgullion," and turned the crystal pool to the color of blood until the soil was washed away. Then the smaller stones were carefully removed and examined, and then another washing of the now nearly empty pan showed the fine black sand covering the bottom. This was in turn as gently washed away.

Alas! the clean pan showed only one or two minute glistening yellow scales, like pinheads, adhering from their specific gravity to the bottom; gold, indeed, but merely enough to indicate "the color," and common to ordinary prospecting in his own locality.

He tried another panful with the same result. He became aware that the pan was leaky, and that infinite care alone prevented the bottom from falling out during the washing. Still it was an experiment, and the result a failure.

Fleming was too old a prospector to take his disappointment seriously. Indeed, it was characteristic of that performance and that period that failure left neither hopelessness nor loss of faith behind it; the prospector had simply miscalculated the exact locality, and was equally as ready to try his luck again. But Fleming thought it high time to return to his own mining work in camp, and at once set off to return the pan to its girlish owner and recover his ring.

As he approached the cabin again, he heard the sound of singing. It was evidently the girl's voice, uplifted in what seemed to be a fragment of some negro camp-meeting hymn: —

> **"Dar was a poor man and his name it was Lazarum,**
> **Lord bress de Lamb — glory hallelugerum!**
> **Lord bress de Lamb!"**

The first two lines had a brisk movement, accented apparently by the clapping of hands or the beating of a tin pan, but the refrain, "Lord bress de Lamb," was drawn out in a lugubrious chant of infinite tenuity.

> **"The rich man died and he went straight to hellerum,**
> **Lord bress de Lamb — glory hallelugerum!**
> **Lord bress de Lamb!"**

Fleming paused at the cabin door. Before he could rap the voice rose again: —

> **"When ye see a poo' man be sure to give him crumbsorum,**
> **Lord bress de Lamb — glory hallelugerum!**
> **Lord bress de Lamb!"**

At the end of this interminable refrain, drawn out in a youthful nasal contralto, Fleming knocked. The girl instantly appeared, holding the ring in her fingers. "I reckoned it was you," she said, with an affected briskness, to conceal her evident dislike at parting with the trinket. "There it is!"

But Fleming was too astounded to speak. With the

opening of the door the sunbonnet had fallen back like a buggy top, disclosing for the first time the head and shoulders of the wearer. She was not a child, but a smart young woman of seventeen or eighteen, and much of his embarrassment arose from the consciousness that he had no reason whatever for having believed her otherwise.

"I hope I did n't interrupt your singing," he said awkwardly.

"It was only one o' mammy's camp-meetin' songs," said the girl.

"Your mother? Is she in?" he asked, glancing past the girl into the kitchen.

"'Tain't mother — she 's dead. Mammy 's our old nurse. She 's gone to Jimtown, and taken my duds to get some new ones fitted to me. These are some o' mother's."

This accounted for her strange appearance; but Fleming noticed that the girl's manner had not the slightest consciousness of their unbecomingness, nor of the charms of face and figure they had marred.

She looked at him curiously. "Hev you got religion?"

"Well, no!" said Fleming, laughing; "I 'm afraid not."

"Dad hez — he 's got it pow'ful."

"Is that the reason he don't like miners?" asked Fleming.

"'Take not to yourself the mammon of unrighteousness,'" said the girl, with the confident air of repeating a lesson. "That 's what the Book says."

"But I read the Bible, too," replied the young man.

"Dad says, 'The letter killeth'!" said the girl sententiously.

Fleming looked at the trophies nailed on the walls with a vague wonder if this peculiar Scriptural destructiveness had anything to do with his skill as a marksman. The girl followed his eye.

"Dad 's a mighty hunter afore the Lord."

"What does he do with these skins?"

"Trades 'em off for grub and fixin's. But he don't believe in trottin' round in the mud for gold."

"Don't you suppose these animals would have preferred it if he had? Gold hunting takes nothing from anybody."

The girl stared at him, and then, to his great surprise, laughed instead of being angry. It was a very fascinating laugh in her imperfectly nourished pale face, and her little teeth revealed the bluish milky whiteness of pips of young Indian corn.

"Wot yer lookin' at?" she asked frankly.

"You," he replied, with equal frankness.

"It 's them duds," she said, looking down at her dress; "I reckon I ain't got the hang o' 'em."

Yet there was not the slightest tone of embarrassment or even coquetry in her manner, as with both hands she tried to gather in the loose folds around her waist.

"Let me help you," he said gravely.

She lifted up her arms with childlike simplicity and backed toward him as he stepped behind her, drew in the folds, and pinned them around what proved a very small waist indeed. Then he untied the apron, took it off, folded it in half, and retied its curtailed proportions around the waist. "It does feel a heap easier," she said, with a little shiver of satisfaction, as she lifted her round cheek, and the tail of her blue eyes with their brown lashes, over her shoulder. It was a tempting moment — but Jack felt that the whole race of gold hunters was on trial just then, and was adamant! Perhaps he was a gentle fellow at heart, too.

"I could loop up that dress also, if I had more pins," he remarked tentatively. Jack had sisters of his own.

The pins were forthcoming. In this operation — a kind of festooning — the girl's petticoat, a piece of common washed-out blue flannel, as pale as her eyes, but of the com-

monest material, became visible, but without fear or reproach to either.

"There, that looks more tidy," said Jack, critically surveying his work and a little of the small ankles revealed. The girl also examined it carefully by its reflection on the surface of the saucepan. "Looks a little like a chiny girl, don't it?"

Jack would have resented this, thinking she meant a Chinese, until he saw her pointing to a cheap crockery ornament, representing a Dutch shepherdess, on the shelf. There was some resemblance.

"You beat mammy out o' sight!" she exclaimed gleefully. "It will jest set her clear crazy when she sees me."

"Then you had better say you did it yourself," said Fleming.

"Why?" asked the girl, suddenly opening her eyes on him with relentless frankness.

"You said your father did n't like miners, and he might n't like your lending your pan to me."

"I 'm more afraid o' lyin' than o' dad," she said, with an elevation of moral sentiment that was, however, slightly weakened by the addition, "Mammy 'll say anything I 'll tell her to say."

"Well, good-by," said Fleming, extending his hand.

"Ye did n't tell me what luck ye had with the pan," she said, delaying taking his hand.

Fleming shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, my usual luck, — nothing," he returned, with a smile.

"Ye seem to keer more for gettin' yer old ring back than for any luck," she continued. "I reckon you ain't much o' a miner."

"I 'm afraid not."

"Ye did n't say wot yer name was, in case dad wants to know."

"I don't think he will want to; but it 's John Fleming."

She took his hand. "You did n't tell me yours," he said, holding the little red fingers, "in case *I* wanted to know."

It pleased her to consider the rejoinder intensely witty. She showed all her little teeth, threw away his hand, and said: —

"G' long with ye, Mr. Fleming. It 's Tinka" —

"Tinker?"

"Yes; short for Katinka, — Katinka Jallinger."

"Good-by, Miss Jallinger."

"Good-by. Dad's name is Henry Boone Jallinger, of Kentucky, ef ye was ever askin'."

"Thank you."

He turned away as she swiftly reëntered the house. As he walked away, he half expected to hear her voice uplifted again in the camp-meeting chant, but he was disappointed. When he reached the top of the hill he turned and looked back at the cabin.

She was apparently waiting for this, and waved him an adieu with the humble pan he had borrowed. It flashed a moment dazzlingly as it caught the declining sun, and then went out, even obliterating the little figure behind it.

PART II

Mr. Jack Fleming was indeed "not much of a miner." He and his partners — both as young, hopeful, and inefficient as himself — had for three months worked a claim in a mountain mining settlement which yielded them a certain amount of healthy exercise, good-humored grumbling, and exalted independence. To dig for three or four hours in the morning, smoke their pipes under a redwood tree for an hour at noon, take up their labors again until sunset, when they "washed up" and gathered sufficient gold to

pay for their daily wants, was, without their seeking it, or even knowing it, the realization of a charming socialistic ideal which better men than themselves had only dreamed of. Fleming fell back into this refined barbarism, giving little thought to his woodland experience, and no revelation of it to his partners. He had transacted their business at the mining town. His deviations en route were nothing to them, and small account to himself.

The third day after his return he was lying under a redwood when his partner approached him.

"You are n't uneasy in your mind about any unpaid bill — say a wash bill — that you 're owing?"

"Why?"

"There 's a big nigger woman in camp looking for you; she 's got a folded account paper in her hand. It looks deucedly like a bill."

"There must be some mistake," suggested Fleming, sitting up.

"She says not, and she 's got your name pat enough! Faulkner" (his other partner) "headed her straight up the gulch, away from camp, while I came down to warn you. So if you choose to skedaddle into the brush out there and lie low until we get her away, we 'll fix it!"

"Nonsense! I 'll see her."

His partner looked aghast at this temerity, but Fleming, jumping to his feet, at once set out to meet his mysterious visitor. This was no easy matter, as the ingenious Faulkner was laboriously leading his charge up the steep gulch road, with great politeness, but many audible misgivings as to whether this was not "Jack Fleming's day for going to Jamestown."

He was further lightening the journey by cheering accounts of the recent depredations of bears and panthers in that immediate locality. When overtaken by Fleming he affected a start of joyful surprise, to conceal the look of

warning which Fleming did not heed, — having no eyes but for Faulkner's companion. She was a very fat negro woman, panting with exertion and suppressed impatience. Fleming's heart was filled with compunction.

"Is you Marse Fleming?" she gasped.

"Yes," said Fleming gently. "What can I do for you?"

"Well! Ye kin pick dis yar insek, dis caterpillier," she said, pointing to Faulkner, "off my paf. Ye kin tell dis yar chipmunk dat when he comes to showin' me mule tracks for b'ar tracks, he 's barkin' up de wrong tree! Dat when he tells me dat he sees panfers a-promenadin' round in de short grass or hidin' behime rocks in de open, he hain't talkin' to no nigger chile, but a growed woman! Ye kin tell him dat Mammy Curtis lived in de woods afo' he was born, and hez seen more b'ars and mountain lyuns dan he hez hairs in his mustarches."

The word "Mammy" brought a flash of recollection to Fleming.

"I am very sorry," he began; but to his surprise the negro woman burst into a good-tempered laugh. "All right, honey! S' long 's you is Marse Fleming and de man dat took dat 'ar pan offer Tinka de odder day, I ain't mindin' yo' frens' bedevilments. I 've got somefin fo' you, yar, and a little box," and she handed him a folded paper.

Fleming felt himself reddening, he knew not why, at which Faulkner discreetly but ostentatiously withdrew, conveying to his other partner painful conviction that Fleming had borrowed a pan from a traveling tinker, whose negro wife was even now presenting a bill for the same, and demanding a settlement. Relieved by his departure, Fleming hurriedly tore open the folded paper. It was a letter written upon a leaf torn out of an old account book, whose ruled lines had undoubtedly given his partners the idea that it was a bill. Fleming hurriedly read the following, traced with a pencil in a schoolgirl's hand: —

MR. J. FLEMING:

Dear Sir, — After you went away that day I took that pan you brought back to mix a batch of bread and biscuits. The next morning at breakfast dad says: "What 's gone o' them thar biscuits — my teeth is just broke with them — they 're so gritty — they 're abominable! What 's this?" says he, and with that he chucks over to me two or three flakes of gold that was in them. You see what had happened, Mr. Fleming, was this! You had better luck than you was knowing of! It was this way! Some of the gold you washed had got slipped into the sides of the pan where it was broke, and the sticky dough must have brought it out, and I kneaded them up unbeknowing. Of course I had to tell a wicked lie, but "Be ye all things to all men," says the Book, and I thought you ought to know your good luck, and I send mammy with this and the gold in a little box. Of course, if dad was a hunter of Mammon and not of God's own beasts, he would have been mighty keen about finding where it came from, but he allows it was in the water in our near spring. So good-by. Do you care for your ring now as much as you did?

Yours very respectfully,

KATINKA JALLINGER.

As Mr. Fleming glanced up from the paper, mammy put a small cardboard box in his hand. For an instant he hesitated to open it, not knowing how far mammy was intrusted with the secret. To his great relief she said briskly: "Well, dar! now dat job 's done gone and offen my han's, I allow to quit and jest get off dis yer camp afo' ye kin shake a stick. So don't tell me nuffin I ain't gotter tell when I goes back."

Fleming understood. "You can tell her I thank her — and — I 'll attend to it," he said vaguely; "that is — I" —

"Hold dar! that 's just enuff, honey — no mo'! So long to ye and youse folks."

He watched her striding away toward the main road, and then opened the box.

It contained three flakes of placer or surface gold, weighing in all about a quarter of an ounce. They could easily have slipped into the interstices of the broken pan and not have been observed by him. If this was the result of the washing of a single pan — and he could now easily imagine that other flakes might have escaped — what — But he stopped, dazed and bewildered at the bare suggestion. He gazed upon the vanishing figure of "mammy." Could she — could Katinka — have the least suspicion of the possibilities of this discovery? Or had Providence put the keeping of this secret into the hands of those who least understood its importance? For an instant he thought of running after her with a word of caution; but on reflection he saw that this might awaken her suspicion and precipitate a discovery by another.

His only safety for the present was silence, until he could repeat his experiment. And that must be done quickly.

How should he get away without his partners' knowledge of his purpose? He was too loyal to them to wish to keep this good fortune to himself, but he was not yet sure of his good fortune. It might be only a little "pocket" which he had just emptied; it might be a larger one which another trial would exhaust.

He had put up no "notice;" he might find it already in possession of Katinka's father, or any chance prospector like himself. In either case he would be covered with ridicule by his partners and the camp, or more seriously rebuked for his carelessness and stupidity. No! he could not tell them the truth; nor could he lie. He would say he was called away for a day on private business.

Luckily for him, the active imagination of his partners

was even now helping him. The theory of the "tinker" and the "pan" was indignantly rejected by his other partner. His blushes and embarrassment were suddenly remembered by Faulkner, and by the time he reached his cabin, they had settled that the negro woman had brought him a love letter! He was young and good looking; what was more natural than that he should have some distant love affair?

His embarrassed statement that he must leave early the next morning on business that he could not at *present* disclose was considered amply confirmatory, and received with maliciously significant acquiescence. "Only," said Faulkner, "at *your* age, sonny," — he was nine months older than Fleming, — "I should have gone *to-night.*" Surely Providence was favoring him!

He was off early the next morning. He was sorely tempted to go first to the cabin, but every moment was precious until he had tested the proof of his good fortune.

It was high noon before he reached the fringe of forest. A few paces farther and he found the spring and outcrop. To avert his partners' suspicions he had not brought his own implements, but had borrowed a pan, spade, and pick from a neighbor's claim before setting out. The spot was apparently in the same condition as when he left it, and with a beating heart he at once set to work, an easy task with his new implements. He nervously watched the water overflow the pan of dirt at its edges until, emptied of earth and gravel, the black sand alone covered the bottom. A slight premonition of disappointment followed; a rich indication would have shown itself before this! A few more workings, and the pan was quite empty except for a few pin-points of "color," almost exactly the quantity he had found before. He washed another pan with the same result. Another taken from a different level of the outcrop

yielded neither more nor less! There was no mistake: it was a failure! His discovery had been only a little "pocket," and the few flakes she had sent him were the first and last of that discovery.

He sat down with a sense of relief; he could face his partners again without disloyalty; he could see that pretty little figure once more without the compunction of having incurred her father's prejudices by locating a permanent claim so near his cabin. In fact, he could carry out his partners' fancy to the letter!

He quickly heaped his implements together and turned to leave the wood; but he was confronted by a figure that at first he scarcely recognized. Yet — it was Katinka! the young girl of the cabin, who had sent him the gold. She was dressed differently — perhaps in her ordinary every-day garments — a bright sprigged muslin, a chip hat with blue ribbons set upon a coil of luxurious brown hair. But what struck him most was that the girlish and diminutive character of the figure had vanished with her ill-fitting clothes; the girl that stood before him was of ordinary height, and of a prettiness and grace of figure that he felt would have attracted anywhere. Fleming felt himself suddenly embarrassed, — a feeling that was not lessened when he noticed that her pretty lip was compressed and her eyebrows a little straightened as she gazed at him.

"Ye made a bee line for the woods, I see," she said coldly. "I allowed ye might have been droppin' in to our house first."

"So I should," said Fleming quickly, "but I thought I ought to first make sure of the information you took the trouble to send me." He hesitated to speak of the ill luck he had just experienced; he could laugh at it himself — but would she?

"And ye got a new pan?" she said half poutingly.

Here seemed his opportunity. "Yes, but I 'm afraid it

has n't the magic of yours. I have n't even got the color. I believe you bewitched your old pan."

Her face flushed a little and brightened, and her lip relaxed with a smile. "Go 'long with yer! Ye don't mean to say ye had no luck to-day?"

"None — but in seeing you."

Her eyes sparkled. "Ye see, I said all 'long ye were n't much o' a miner. Ye ain't got no faith. Ef ye had as much as a grain o' mustard seed, ye 'd remove mountains; it 's in the Book."

"Yes, and this mountain is on the bed-rock, and my faith is not strong enough," he said laughingly. "And then, that would be having faith in Mammon, and you don't want me to have *that.*"

She looked at him curiously. "I jest reckon ye don't care a picayune whether ye strike anything or not," she said half admiringly.

"To please you I 'll try again, if you 'll look on. Perhaps you 'll bring me luck as you did before. You shall take the pan. I will fill it and you shall wash it out. You 'll be my *mascot.*"

She stiffened a little at this, and then said pertly, "Wot 's that?"

"My good fairy."

She smiled again, this time with a new color in her pale face. "Maybe I am," she said, with sudden gravity.

He quickly filled the pan again with soil, brought it to the spring, and first washed out the greater bulk of loose soil. "Now come here and kneel down beside me," he said, "and take the pan and do as I show you."

She knelt down obediently. Suddenly she lifted her little hand with a gesture of warning. "Wait a minit — jest a minit — till the water runs clear again."

The pool had become slightly discolored from the first washing.

"That makes no difference," he said quickly.

"Ah! but wait, please!" She laid her brown hand upon his arm; a pleasant warmth seemed to follow her touch. Then she said joyously, "Look down there."

"Where?" he asked.

"There — don't ye see it?"

"See what?"

"You and me!"

He looked where she pointed. The pool had settled, resumed its mirror-like calm, and reflected distinctly, not only their two bending faces, but their two figures kneeling side by side. Two tall redwoods rose on either side of them, like the columns before an altar.

There was a moment of silence. The drone of a bumble-bee near by seemed to make the silence swim drowsily in their ears; far off they heard the faint beat of a woodpecker. The suggestion of their kneeling figures in this magic mirror was vague, unreasoning, yet for the moment none the less irresistible. His arm instinctively crept around her little waist as he whispered, — he scarce knew what he said, — "Perhaps here is the treasure I am seeking."

The girl laughed, released herself, and sprang up; the pan sank ingloriously to the bottom of the pool, where Fleming had to grope for it, assisted by Tinka, who rolled up her sleeve to her elbow. For a minute or two they washed gravely, but with no better success than had attended his own individual efforts. The result in the bottom of the pan was the same. Fleming laughed.

"You see," he said gayly, "the Mammon of unrighteousness is not for me — at least, so near your father's tabernacle."

"That makes no difference now," said the girl quickly, "for dad is goin' to move, anyway, farther up the mountains. He says it 's gettin' too crowded for him here — when the last settler took up a section three miles off."

"And are *you* going too?" asked the young man earnestly.

Tinka nodded her brown head. Fleming heaved a genuine sigh. "Well, I 'll try my hand here a little longer. I 'll put up a notice of claim; I don't suppose your father would object. You know he could n't *legally.*"

"I reckon ye might do it ef ye wanted — ef ye was *that* keen on gettin' gold!" said Tinka, looking away. There was something in the girl's tone which this budding lover resented. He had become sensitive.

"Oh, well," he said, " I see that it might make unpleasantness with your father. I only thought," he went on, with tenderer tentativeness, "that it would be pleasant to work here near you."

"Ye 'd be only wastin' yer time," she said darkly.

Fleming rose gravely. "Perhaps you 're right," he answered sadly and a little bitterly, "and I 'll go at once."

He walked to the spring, and gathered up his tools. "Thank you again for your kindness, and good-by."

He held out his hand, which she took passively, and he moved away.

But he had not gone far before she called him. He turned to find her still standing where he had left her, her little hands clinched at her side, and her widely opened eyes staring at him. Suddenly she ran at him, and, catching the lapels of his coat in both hands, held him rigidly fast.

"No! no! ye shan't go — ye must n't go!" she said, with hysterical intensity. "I want to tell ye something! Listen! — you — you — Mr. Fleming! I 've been a wicked, wicked girl! I 've told lies to dad — to mammy — to *you!* I 've borne false witness — I 'm worse than Sapphira — I 've acted a big lie. Oh, Mr. Fleming, I 've made you come back here for nothing! Ye did n't find no gold the other day. There was n't any. It was all me! I — I — *salted that pan!*"

"Salted it!" echoed Fleming, in amazement.

"Yes, 'salted it,'" she faltered; "that 's what dad says they call it — what those wicked sons of Mammon do to their claims to sell them. I — put gold in the pan myself; it was n't there before."

"But why?" gasped Fleming.

She stopped. Then suddenly the fountains in the deep of her blue eyes were broken up; she burst into a sob, and buried her head in her hands, and her hands on his shoulder. "Because — because" — she sobbed against him — "*I wanted you* to come back!"

He folded her in his arms. He kissed her lovingly, forgivingly, gratefully, tearfully, smilingly — and paused; then he kissed her sympathetically, understandingly, apologetically, explanatorily, in lieu of other conversation. Then, becoming coherent, he asked, —

"But *where* did you get the gold?"

"Oh," she said between fitful and despairing sobs, "somewhere! — I don't know — out of the old Run — long ago — when I was little! I did n't never dare say anything to dad — he 'd have been crazy mad at his own daughter diggin' — and I never cared nor thought a single bit about it until I saw you."

"And you have never been there since?"

"Never."

"Nor anybody else?"

"No."

Suddenly she threw back her head; her chip hat fell back from her face, rosy with a dawning inspiration! "Oh, say, Jack! — you don't think that — after all this time — there might" — She did not finish the sentence, but, grasping his hand, cried, "Come!"

She caught up the pan, he seized the shovel and pick, and they raced like boy and girl down the hill. When within a few hundred feet of the house she turned at right

angles into the clearing, and saying, "Don't be skeered; dad 's away," ran boldly on, still holding his hand, along the little valley. At its farther extremity they came to the "Run," a half-dried watercourse whose rocky sides were marked by the erosion of winter torrents. It was apparently as wild and secluded as the forest spring. "Nobody ever came here," said the girl hurriedly, "after dad sunk the well at the house."

One or two pools still remained in the Run from the last season's flow, water enough to wash out several pans of dirt.

Selecting a spot where the white quartz was visible, Fleming attacked the bank with the pick. After one or two blows it began to yield and crumble away at his feet. He washed out a panful perfunctorily, more intent on the girl than his work; she, eager, alert, and breathless, had changed places with him, and become the anxious prospector! But the result was the same. He threw away the pan with a laugh, to take her little hand! But she whispered, "Try again."

He attacked the bank once more with such energy that a great part of it caved and fell, filling the pan and even burying the shovel in the débris. He unearthed the latter while Tinka was struggling to get out the pan.

"The mean thing is stuck and won't move," she said pettishly. "I think it 's broken now, too, just like ours."

Fleming came laughingly forward, and, putting one arm around the girl's waist, attempted to assist her with the other. The pan was immovable, and, indeed, seemed to be broken and bent. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation and began hurriedly to brush away the dirt and throw the soil out of the pan.

In another moment he had revealed a fragment of decomposed quartz, like discolored honeycombed cheese, half filling the pan. But on its side, where the pick had struck it glancingly, there was a yellow streak like a ray of sunshine!

And as he strove to lift it he felt in that unmistakable omnipotency of weight that it was seamed and celled with gold.

The news of Mr. Fleming's engagement, two weeks later, to the daughter of the recluse religious hunter who had made a big strike at Lone Run, excited some skeptical discussion, even among the honest congratulations of his partners.

"That 's a mighty queer story how Jack got that girl sweet on him just by borrowin' a prospectin' pan of her," said Faulkner, between the whiffs of his pipe under the trees. "You and me might have borrowed a hundred prospectin' pans and never got even a drink thrown in. Then to think of that old preachin' coon-hunter hevin' to give in and pass his strike over to his daughter's feller, jest because he had scruples about gold diggin' himself. He 'd hev booted you and me outer his ranch first."

"Lord, ye ain't takin' no stock in that hogwash," responded the other. "Why, everybody knows old man Jallinger pretended to be sick o' miners and minin' camps, and could n't bear to hev 'em near him, only jest because he himself was all the while secretly prospectin' the whole lode and did n't want no interlopers. It was only when Fleming nippled in by gettin' hold o' the girl that Jallinger knew the secret was out, and that 's the way he bought him off. Why, Jack was n't no miner — never was — ye could see that. *He* never struck anything. The only treasure he found in the woods was Tinka Jallinger!"

A BELLE OF CAÑADA CITY

Cissy was tying her hat under her round chin before a small glass at her window. The window gave upon a background of serrated mountain and olive-shadowed cañon, with a faint additional outline of a higher snow level — the only dreamy suggestion of the whole landscape. The foreground was a glaringly fresh and unpicturesque mining town, whose irregular attempts at regularity were set forth with all the cruel, uncompromising clearness of the Californian atmosphere. There was the straight Main Street with its new brick block of "stores," ending abruptly against a tangled bluff; there was the ruthless clearing in the sedate pines where the hideous spire of the new church imitated the soaring of the solemn shafts it had displaced with almost irreligious mockery. Yet this foreground was Cissy's world — her life, her sole girlish experience. She did not, however, bother her pretty head with the view just then, but moved her cheek up and down before the glass, the better to examine by the merciless glare of the sunlight a few freckles that starred the hollows of her temples. Like others of her sex, she was a poor critic of what was her real beauty, and quarreled with that peculiar texture of her healthy skin which made her face as eloquent in her sun-kissed cheek as in her bright eyes and expression. Nevertheless, she was somewhat consoled by the ravishing effect of the bowknot she had just tied, and turned away not wholly dissatisfied. Indeed, as the acknowledged belle of Cañada City and the daughter of its principal banker, small wonder that a certain frank vanity and childlike imperiousness were among her faults — and her attractions.

She bounded down the stairs and into the front parlor, for their house possessed the unheard-of luxury of a double drawing-room, albeit the second apartment contained a desk, and was occasionally used by Cissy's father in private business interviews with anxious seekers of "advances" who shunned the publicity of the bank. Here she instantly flew into the arms of her bosom friend, Miss Piney Tibbs, a girl only a shade or two less pretty than herself, who, always more or less ill at ease in these splendors, was awaiting her impatiently. For Miss Tibbs was merely the daughter of the hotel-keeper; and although Tibbs was a Southerner, and had owned "his own niggers" in the States, she was of inferior position and a protégée of Cissy's.

"Thank goodness you 've come," exclaimed Miss Tibbs, "for I 've been sittin' here till I nigh took root. What kep' ye?"

"How does it look?" responded Cissy, as a relevant reply.

The "it" referred to Cissy's new hat, and to the young girl the coherence was perfectly plain. Miss Tibbs looked at "it" severely. It would not do for a protégée to be too complaisant.

"Hem! Must have cost a heap o' money."

"It did! Came from the best milliner in San Francisco."

"Of course," said Piney, with half-assumed envy. "When your popper runs the bank and just wallows in gold!"

"Never mind, dear," replied Cissy cheerfully. "So 'll *your* popper some day. I 'm goin' to get mine to let *your* popper into something — Ditch stocks and such. Yes! True, O King! Popper 'll do anything for me," she added a little loftily.

Loyal as Piney was to her friend, she was by no means convinced of this. She knew the difference between the

two men, and had a vivid recollection of hearing her own father express his opinion of Cissy's respected parent as a "Gold Shark" and "Quartz Miner Crusher." It did not, however, affect her friendship for Cissy. She only said, "Let 's come!" caught Cissy around the waist, pranced with her out into the veranda, and gasped, out of breath, "Where are we goin' first?"

"Down Main Street," said Cissy promptly.

"And let 's stop at Markham's store. They 've got some new things in from Sacramento," added Piney.

"Country styles," returned Cissy, with a supercilious air. "No! Besides, Markham's head clerk is gettin' too presumptuous. Just guess! He asked me, while I was buyin' something, if I enjoyed the dance last Monday!"

"But you danced with him," said the simple Piney, in astonishment.

"But not in his store among his customers," said Cissy sapiently. "No! we 're going down Main Street past Secamps'. Those Secamp girls are sure to be at their windows, looking out. This hat will just turn 'em green — greener than ever."

"You 're just horrid, Ciss!" said Piney, with admiration.

"And then," continued Cissy, "we 'll just sail down past the new block to the parson's and make a call."

"Oh, I see," said Piney archly. "It 'll be just about the time when the new engineer of the mill works has a clean shirt on, and is smoking his cigyar before the office."

Cissy tossed her hat disdainfully. "Much anybody cares whether he 's there or not! I have n't forgotten how he showed us over the mill the other day in a pair of overalls, just like a workman."

"But they say he 's awfully smart and well educated, and need n't work, and I 'm sure it 's very nice of him to dress just like the other men when he 's with 'em," urged Piney.

"Bah! That was just to show that he did n't care what we thought of him, he 's that conceited! And it was n't respectful, considering one of the directors was there, all dressed up. Don't tell me! You can see it in his eye, looking you over without blinking and then turning away as if he 'd got enough of you. He makes me tired."

Piney did not reply. The engineer had seemed to her to be a singularly attractive young man, yet she was equally impressed with Cissy's superior condition, which could find flaws in such perfection. Following her friend down the steps of the veranda, they passed into the staring graveled walk of the new garden, only recently recovered from the wild wood, its accurate diamond and heart shaped beds of vivid green set in white quartz borders giving it the appearance of elaborately iced confectionery. A few steps further brought them to the road and the wooden "sidewalk" to Main Street, which carried civic improvements to the hillside, and Mr. Trixit's very door. Turning down this thoroughfare, they stopped laughing, and otherwise assumed a conscious, half-artificial air; for it was the hour when Cañada City lounged listlessly before its shops, its saloons, its offices and mills, or even held lazy meetings in the dust of the roadway, and the passage down the principal street of its two prettiest girls was an event to be viewed as if it were a civic procession. Hats flew off as they passed; place was freely given; impeding barrels and sacks were removed from the wooden pavement, and preoccupied indwellers hastily summoned to the front door to do homage to Cissy Trixit and Piney as they went by. Not but that Cañada City, in the fierce and unregenerate days of its youth, had seen fairer and higher colored faces, more gayly bedizened, on its thoroughfares, but never anything so fresh and innocent. Men stood there all unconsciously, reverencing their absent mothers, sisters, and daughters, in their spontaneous homage to the pair, and seemed to feel the

wholesome breath of their Eastern homes wafted from the freshly ironed skirts of these foolish virgins as they rustled by. I am afraid that neither Cissy nor Piney appreciated this feeling; few women did at that time; indeed, these young ladies assumed a slight air of hauteur.

"Really, they do stare so," said Cissy, with eyes dilating with pleasurable emotion; "we 'll have to take the back street next time!"

Piney, proud in the glory reflected from Cissy, and in her own, answered, "We will — sure!"

There was only one interruption to this triumphal progress, and that was so slight as to be noticed by only one of the two girls. As they passed the new works at the mill, the new engineer, as Piney had foreseen, was leaning against the doorpost, smoking a pipe. He took his hat from his head and his pipe from his mouth as they approached, and greeted them with an easy "Good-afternoon," yet with a glance that was quietly observant and tolerantly critical.

"There!" said Cissy, when they had passed, "did n't I tell you? Did you ever see such conceit in your born days? I hope you did not look at him."

Piney, conscious of having done so, and of having blushed under his scrutiny, nevertheless stoutly asserted that she had merely looked at him "to see who it was." But Cissy was placated by passing the Secamps' cottage, from whose windows the three strapping daughters of John Secamp, lately an emigrant from Missouri, were, as Cissy had surmised, lightening the household duties by gazing at the — to them — unwonted wonders of the street. Whether their complexions, still bearing traces of the alkali dust and inefficient nourishment of the plains, took a more yellow tone from the spectacle of Cissy's hat, I cannot say. Cissy thought they did; perhaps Piney was nearer the truth when she suggested that they were only "looking" to enable them to make a home-made copy of the hat next week.

Their progress forward and through the outskirts of the town was of the same triumphal character. Teamsters withheld their oaths and their uplifted whips as the two girls passed by; weary miners, toiling in ditches, looked up with a pleasure that was half reminiscent of their past; younger skylarkers stopped in their horse-play with half-smiling, half-apologetic faces; more ambitious riders on the highway urged their horses to greater speed under the girls' inspiring eyes, and "Vaquero Billy," charging them, full tilt, brought up his mustang on its haunches and rigid forelegs, with a sweeping bow of his sombrero, within a foot of their artfully simulated terror. In this way they at last reached the clearing in the forest, the church with its ostentatious spire, and the Reverend Mr. Windibrook's dwelling, otherwise humorously known as "The Pastorage," where Cissy intended to call.

The Reverend Mr. Windibrook had been selected by his ecclesiastical superiors to minister to the spiritual wants of Cañada City as being what was called a "hearty" man. Certainly, if considerable lung capacity, absence of reserve, and power of hand-shaking and back-slapping were necessary to the redemption of Cañada City, Mr. Windibrook's ministration would have been successful. But, singularly enough, the rude miner was apt to resent this familiarity, and it is recorded that Isaac Wood, otherwise known as "Grizzly Woods," once responded to a cheerful back-slap from the reverend gentleman by an ostentatiously friendly hug which nearly dislocated the parson's ribs. Perhaps Mr. Windibrook was more popular on account of his admiring enthusiasm of the prosperous money-getting members of his flock and a singular sympathy with their methods, and Mr. Trixit's daring speculations were an especially delightful theme to him.

"Ah, Miss Trixit," he said, as Cissy entered the little parlor, "and how is your dear father? Still startling the

money market with his fearless speculations? This, brother Jones," turning to a visitor, "is the daughter of our Napoleon of finance, Montagu Trixit. Only last week, in that deal in 'the Comstock,' he cleared fifty thousand dollars! Yes, sir," repeating it with unction, "fifty — thousand — dollars! — in about two hours, and with a single stroke of the pen! I believe I am not overstating, Miss Trixit?" he added, appealing to Cissy with a portentous politeness that was as badly fitting as his previous "heartiness."

Cissy colored slightly. "I don't know," she said simply. She was perfectly truthful. She knew nothing of her father's business, except the vague reputation of his success.

Her modesty, however, produced a singular hilarity in Mr. Windibrook, and a playful push. "*You* don't know? Ha, but *I* do. Yes, sir," — to the visitor, — "I have reason to remember it. I called upon him the next day. I used, sir, the freedom of an old friend. 'Trixit,' I said, clapping my hand on his shoulder, 'the Lord has been good to you. I congratulate you.'

"'H'm!' he said, without looking up. 'What do you reckon those congratulations are worth?'

"Many a man, sir, who did n't know his style, would have been staggered. But I knew my man. I looked him straight in the eye. 'A new organ,' I said, 'and as good a one as Sacramento can turn out.'

"He took up a piece of paper, scrawled a few lines on it to his cashier, and said, 'Will that do?'" Mr. Windibrook's voice sank to a thrilling whisper. "It was an order for one thousand dollars! Fact, sir. *That* is the father of this young lady."

"Ye had better luck than Bishop Briggs had with old Johnson, the Excelsior Bank president," said the visitor, encouraged by Windibrook's "heartiness" into a humorous

retrospect. "Briggs goes to him for a subscription for a new fence round the buryin'-ground — the old one havin' rotted away. 'Ye don't want no fence,' sez Johnson, short like. 'No fence round a buryin'-ground?' sez Briggs, starin'. 'No! Them as is *in* the buryin'-ground can't get *out*, and them as *is n't* don't want to get *in*, nohow! So you kin just travel — I ain't givin' money away on uselessnesses!' Ha! ha!"

A chill silence followed, which checked even Piney's giggle. Mr. Windibrook evidently had no "heartiness" for non-subscribing humor. "There are those who can jest with sacred subjects," he said ponderously, "but I have always found Mr. Trixit, though blunt, eminently practical. Your father is still away," he added, shifting the conversation to Cissy, "hovering wherever he can extract the honey to store up for the provision of age. An industrious worker."

"He 's still away," said Cissy, feeling herself on safe ground, though she was not aware of her father's entomological habits. "In San Francisco, I think."

She was glad to get away from Mr. Windibrook's "heartiness" and console herself with Mrs. Windibrook's constitutional depression, which was partly the result of nervous dyspepsia and her husband's boisterous cordiality. "I suppose, dear, you are dreadfully anxious about your father when he is away from home?" she said to Cissy, with a sympathetic sigh.

Cissy, conscious of never having felt a moment's anxiety, and accustomed to his absences, replied naïvely, "Why?"

"Oh," responded Mrs. Windibrook, "on account of his great business responsibilities, you know; so much depends upon him."

Again Cissy did not comprehend; she could not understand why this masterful man, her father, who was equal to her own and, it seemed, everybody's needs, had any

responsibility, or was not as infallible and constant as the sunshine or the air she breathed. Without being his confidante, or even his associate, she had since her mother's death no other experience; youthfully alive to the importance of their wealth, it seemed to her, however, only a natural result of being *his* daughter. She smiled vaguely and a little impatiently. They might have talked to her about *herself;* it was a little tiresome to always have to answer questions about her "popper." Nevertheless, she availed herself of Mrs. Windibrook's invitation to go into the garden and see the new summer-house that had been put up among the pines, and gradually diverted her hostess's conversation into gossip of the town. If it was somewhat lugubrious and hesitating, it was, however, a relief to Cissy, and bearing chiefly upon the vicissitudes of others, gave her the comforting glow of comparison.

Touching the complexion of the Secamp girls, Mrs. Windibrook attributed it to their great privations in the alkali desert. "One day," continued Mrs. Windibrook, "when their father was ill with fever and ague, they drove the cattle twenty miles to water through that dreadful poisonous dust, and when they got there their lips were cracked and bleeding and their eyelids like burning knives, and Mamie Secamp's hair, which used to be a beautiful brown like your own, my dear, was bleached into a rusty yellow."

"And they *will* wear colors that don't suit them," said Cissy impatiently.

"Never mind, dear," said Mrs. Windibrook ambiguously; "I suppose they will have their reward."

Nor was the young engineer discussed in a lighter vein. "It pains me dreadfully to see that young man working with the common laborers and giving himself no rest, just because he says he wants to know exactly 'how the thing is done' and why the old works failed," she remarked sadly. "When Mr. Windibrook knew he was the son of

Judge Masterton and had rich relations, he wished, of course, to be civil, but somehow young Masterton and he did n't 'hit off.' Indeed, Mr. Windibrook was told that he had declared that the prosperity of Cañada City was only a mushroom growth, and it seems too shocking to repeat, dear, but they say he said that the new church — *our* church — was simply using the Almighty as a big bluff to the other towns. Of course, Mr. Windibrook could n't see him after that. Why, he even said your father ought to send you to school somewhere, and not let you grow up in this half-civilized place."

Strangely enough, Cissy did not hail this corroboration of her dislike to young Masterton with the liveliness one might have expected. Perhaps it was because Piney Tibbs was no longer present, having left Cissy at the parsonage and returned home. Still she enjoyed her visit after a fashion, romped with the younger Windibrooks and climbed a tree in the security of her sylvan seclusion and the promptings of her still healthy, girlish blood, and only came back to cake and tea and her new hat, which she had prudently hung up in the summer-house, as the afternoon was waning. When they returned to the house, they found that Mr. Windibrook had gone out with his visitor, and Cissy was spared the advertisement of a boisterous escort home, which he generally insisted upon. She gayly took leave of the infant Windibrook and his mother, sallied out into the empty road, and once more became conscious of her new hat.

The shadows were already lengthening, and a cool breeze stirred the deep aisles of the pines on either side of the highway. One or two people passed her hurriedly, talking and gesticulating, evidently so preoccupied that they did not notice her. Again, a rapid horseman rode by without glancing round, overtook the pedestrians, exchanged a few hurried words with them, and then spurred swiftly away as

one of them shouted after him, "There 's another dispatch confirming it." A group of men talking by the roadside failed to look up as she passed. Cissy pouted slightly at this want of taste, which made some late election news or the report of a horse race more enthralling than her new hat and its owner. Even the toilers in the ditches had left their work, and were congregated around a man who was reading aloud from a widely margined "extra" of the "Cañada City Press." It seemed provoking, as she knew her cheeks were glowing from her romp, and was conscious that she was looking her best. However, the Secamps' cottage was just before her, and the girls were sure to be on the lookout! She shook out her skirts and straightened her pretty little figure as she approached the house. But to her surprise, her coming had evidently been anticipated by them, and they were actually — and unexpectedly — awaiting her behind the low whitewashed garden palings! As she neared them they burst into a shrill, discordant laugh, so full of irony, gratified malice, and mean exaltation that Cissy was for a moment startled. But only for a moment; she had her father's reckless audacity, and bore them down with a display of such pink cheeks and flashing eyes that their laughter was checked, and they remained open-mouthed as she swept by them.

Perhaps this incident prevented her from noticing another but more passive one. A group of men standing before the new mill — the same men who had so solicitously challenged her attention with their bows a couple of hours ago — turned as she approached and suddenly dispersed. It was not until this was repeated by another group that its oddity forced itself upon her still angry consciousness. Then the street seemed to be full of those excited preoccupied groups who melted away as she advanced. Only one man met her curious eyes, — the engineer, — yet she missed the usual critical smile with which he was wont to greet

her, and he gave her a bow of such profound respect and gravity that for the first time she felt really uneasy. Was there something wrong with her hat? That dreadful, fateful hat! Was it too conspicuous? Did he think it was vulgar? She was eager to cross the street on the next block where there were large plate-glass windows which she and Piney — if Piney were only with her now! — had often used as mirrors.

But there was a great crowd on the next block, congregated around the bank, — her father's bank! A vague terror, she knew not what, now began to creep over her. She would have turned into a side street, but mingled with her fear was a resolution not to show it, — not to even *think* of it, — to combat it as she had combated the horrid laugh of the Secamp girls, and she kept on her way with a beating heart but erect head, without looking across the street.

There was another crowd before the newspaper office — also on the other side — and a bulletin board, but she would not try to read it. Only one idea was in her mind, — to reach home before any one should speak to her; for the last intelligible sound that had reached her was the laugh of the Secamp girls, and this was still ringing in her ears, seeming to voice the hidden strangeness of all she saw, and stirring her, as that had, with childish indignation. She kept on with unmoved face, however, and at last turned into the planked side-terrace, — a part of her father's munificence, — and reached the symmetrical garden-beds and graveled walk. She ran up the steps of the veranda and entered the drawing-room through the open French window. Glancing around the familiar room, at her father's closed desk, at the open piano with the piece of music she had been practicing that morning, the whole walk seemed only a foolish dream that had frightened her. She was Cissy Trixit, the daughter of the richest man in the town! This was her father's house, the wonder of Cañada City!

A ring at the front doorbell startled her; without waiting for the servant to answer it, she stepped out on the veranda, and saw a boy whom she recognized as a waiter at the hotel kept by Piney's father. He was holding a note in his hand, and staring intently at the house and garden. Seeing Cissy, he transferred his stare to her. Snatching the note from him, she tore it open, and read in Piney's well-known scrawl, "Dad won't let me come to you now, dear, but I 'll try to slip out late to-night." Why should she want to come? She had said nothing about coming *now* — and why should her father prevent her? Cissy crushed the note between her fingers, and faced the boy.

"What are you staring at — idiot?"

The boy grinned hysterically, a little frightened at Cissy's straightened brows and snapping eyes.

"Get away! there 's no answer."

The boy ran off, and Cissy returned to the drawing-room. Then it occurred to her that the servant had not answered the bell. She rang again furiously. There was no response. She called down the basement staircase, and heard only the echo of her voice in the depths. How still the house was! Were they *all* out, — Susan, Norah, the cook, the Chinaman, and the gardener? She ran down into the kitchen; the back door was open, the fires were burning, dishes were upon the table, but the kitchen was empty. Upon the floor lay a damp copy of the "extra." She picked it up quickly. Several black headlines stared her in the face. "Enormous Defalcation!" "Montagu Trixit Absconded!" "50,000 Dollars Missing!" "Run on the Bank!"

She threw the paper through the open door as she would have hurled back the accusation from living lips. Then, in a revulsion of feeling lest any one should find her there, she ran upstairs and locked herself in her own room.

So that was what it all meant! All! — from the laugh

of the Secamp girls to the turning away of the townspeople as she went by. Her father was a thief who had stolen money from the bank and run away leaving her alone to bear it! No! It was all a lie — a wicked, jealous lie! A foolish lie, for how could he steal money from *his own* bank? Cissy knew very little of her father — perhaps that was why she believed in him; she knew still less of business, but she knew that *he* did. She had often heard them say it — perhaps the very ones who now called him names. He! who had made Cañada City what it was! *He*, who, Windibrook said, only to-day, had, like Moses, touched the rocks of the Cañada with his magic wand of Finance, and streams of public credit and prosperity had gushed from it! She would never speak to them again! She would shut herself up here, dismiss all the servants but the Chinaman, and wait until her father returned.

There was a knock, and the entreating voice of Norah, the cook, outside the door. Cissy unlocked it and flung it open indignantly.

"Ah! It 's yourself, miss — and I never knew ye kem back till I met that gossoon of a hotel waiter in the street," said the panting servant. "Sure it was only an hour ago while I was at me woorrck in the kitchen, and Jim rushes in and sez: 'For the love of God, if iver ye want to see a blessed cint of the money ye put in the masther's bank, off wid ye now and draw it out — for there 's a run on the bank!' "

"It was an infamous lie," said Cissy fiercely.

"Sure, miss, how was oi to know? And if the masther *has* gone away, it 's ownly takin' me money from the other divils down there that 's drawin' it out and dividin' it betwixt and between them."

Cissy had a very vague idea of what a "run on the bank" meant, but Norah's logic seemed to satisfy her feminine reason. She softened a little.

"Mr. Windibrook is in the parlor, miss, and a jintleman on the veranda," continued Norah, encouraged.

Cissy started. "I 'll come down," she said briefly.

Mr. Windibrook was waiting beside the piano, with his soft hat in one hand and a large white handkerchief in the other. He had confidently expected to find Cissy in tears, and was ready with boisterous condolement, but was a little taken aback as the young girl entered with a pale face, straightened brows, and eyes that shone with audacious rebellion. However, it was too late to change his attitude. "Ah, my young friend," he said a little awkwardly, "we must not give way to our emotions, but try to recognize in our trials the benefits of a great lesson. But," he added hurriedly, seeing her stand still silent but erect before him, "I see that you do!" He paused, coughed slightly, cast a glance at the veranda, — where Cissy now for the first time observed a man standing in an obviously assumed attitude of negligent abstraction, — moved towards the back room, and in a lower voice said, "A word with you in private."

Without replying, Cissy followed him.

"If," said Mr. Windibrook, with a sickly smile, "you are questioned regarding your father's affairs, you may remember his peculiar and utterly unsolicited gift of a certain sum towards a new organ, to which I alluded to-day. You can say that he always expressed great liberality towards the church, and it was no surprise to you."

Cissy only stared at him with dangerous eyes.

"Mrs. Windibrook," continued the reverend gentleman in his highest, heartiest voice, albeit a little hurried, "wished me to say to you that until you heard from — your friends — she wanted you to come and stay with her. *Do* come! *Do!*"

Cissy, with her bright eyes fixed upon her visitor, said, "I shall stay here."

"But," said Mr. Windibrook impatiently, "you cannot. That man you see on the veranda is the sheriff's officer. The house and all that it contains are in the hands of the law."

Cissy's face whitened in proportion as her eyes grew darker, but she said stoutly, "I shall stay here till my popper tells me to go."

"Till your popper tells you to go!" repeated Mr. Windibrook harshly, dropping his heartiness and his handkerchief in a burst of unguarded temper. "Your papa is a thief escaping from justice, you foolish girl; a disgraced felon, who dare not show his face again in Cañada City; and you are lucky, yes! lucky, miss, if you do not share his disgrace!"

"And you 're a wicked, wicked liar!" said Cissy, clinching her little fists at her side and edging towards him with a sidelong bantam-like movement as she advanced her freckled cheek close to his with an effrontery so like her absconding father that he recoiled before it. "And a mean, double-faced hypocrite, too! Did n't you always praise him? Did n't you call him a Napoleon, and a — Moses? Did n't you say he was the making of Cañada City? Did n't you get him to raise your salary, and start a subscription for your new house? Oh, you — you — stinking beast!"

Here the stranger on the veranda, still gazing abstractedly at the landscape, gave a low and apparently unconscious murmur, as if enraptured with the view. Mr. Windibrook, recalled to an attempt at dignity, took up his hat and handkerchief. "When you have remembered yourself and your position, Miss Trixit," he said loftily, "the offer I have made you" —

"I despise it! I 'd sooner stay in the woods with the grizzlies and rattlesnakes!" said Cissy pantingly. "Go and leave me alone! Do you hear?" She stamped her little foot. "Are you listening? Go!"

Mr. Windibrook promptly retreated through the door and down the steps into the garden, at which the stranger on the veranda reluctantly tore himself away from the landscape and slowly entered the parlor through the open French window. Here, however, he became equally absorbed and abstracted in the condition of his beard, carefully stroking his shaven cheek and lips and pulling his goatee.

After a pause he turned to the angry Cissy, standing by the piano, radiant with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, and said slowly, "I reckon you gave the parson as good as he sent. It kinder settles a man to hear the frozen truth about himself sometimes, and you 've helped old Shadbelly considerably on the way towards salvation. But he was right about one thing, Miss Trixit. The house *is* in the hands of the law. I 'm representing it as deputy sheriff. Mebbe you might remember me — Jake Poole — when your father was addressing the last Citizens' meeting, sittin' next to him on the platform — *I* 'm in possession. It is n't a job I 'm hankerin' much arter; I 'd a lief rather hunt hoss thieves or track down road agents than this kind o' fancy, underhand work. So you 'll excuse me, miss, if I ain't got the style." He paused, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and then said slowly and with great deliberation: "Ef there 's any little thing here, miss, — any keepsakes or such trifles ez you keer for in partickler, things you would n't like strangers to have, — you just make a little pile of 'em and drop 'em down somewhere outside the back door. There ain't no inventory taken nor sealin' up of anythin' done just yet, though I have to see there ain't anythin' disturbed. But I kalkilate to walk out on that veranda for a spell and look at the landscape." He paused again, and said, with a sigh of satisfaction, "It 's a mighty pooty view out thar; it just takes me every time."

As he turned and walked out through the French window, Cissy did not for a moment comprehend him; then,

strangely enough, his act of rude courtesy for the first time awakened her to the full sense of the situation. This house, her father's house, was no longer hers! If her father should *never* return, she wanted nothing from it, *nothing!* She gripped her beating heart with the little hand she had clinched so valiantly a moment ago. Suddenly her hand dropped. Some one had glided noiselessly into the back room; a figure in a blue blouse; a Chinaman, their house servant, Ah Fe. He cast a furtive glance at the stranger on the veranda, and then beckoned to her stealthily. She came towards him wonderingly, when he suddenly whipped a note from his sleeve, and with a dexterous movement slipped it into her fingers. She tore it open. A single glance showed her a small key inclosed in a line of her father's handwriting. Drawing quickly back into the corner, she read as follows: "If this reaches you in time, take from the second drawer of my desk an envelope marked 'Private Contracts' and give it to the bearer." There was neither signature nor address.

Putting her finger to her lips, she cast a quick glance at the absorbed figure on the veranda and stepped before the desk. She fitted the key to the drawer and opened it rapidly but noiselessly. There lay the envelope, and among other ticketed papers a small roll of greenbacks — such as her father often kept there. It was *his* money; she did not scruple to take it with the envelope. Handing the latter to the Chinaman, who made it instantly disappear up his sleeve like a conjurer's act, she signed him to follow her into the hall.

"Who gave you that note, Ah Fe?" she whispered breathlessly.

"Chinaman."

"Who gave it to him?"

"Chinaman."

"And to *him?*"

"Nollee Chinaman."

"Another Chinaman?"

"Yes — heap Chinaman — allee same as gang."

"You mean it passed from one Chinaman's hand to another?"

"Allee same."

"Why did n't the first Chinaman who got it bring it here?"

"S'pose Mellikan man want to catchee lettel. He spotty Chinaman. He follee Chinaman. Chinaman passee lettel nex' Chinaman. He no get. Mellikan man no habe got. *Sabe?*"

"Then this package will go back the same way?"

"Allee same."

"And who will *you* give it to now?"

"Allee same man blingee me lettel. Hop Li — who makee washee."

An idea here struck Cissy which made her heart jump and her cheeks flame. Ah Fe gazed at her with an infantile smile of admiration.

"How far did that letter come?" she asked, with eager questioning eyes.

"Lettee me see him," said Ah Fe.

Cissy handed him the missive; he examined closely some half a dozen Chinese characters that were scrawled along the length of the outer fold, and which she had innocently supposed were a part of the markings of the rice paper on which the note was written.

"Heap Chinaman velly much walkee — longee way! S'pose you look." He pointed through the open front door to the prospect beyond. It was a familiar one to Cissy, — the long Cañada, the crest on crest of serried pines, and beyond the dim snow-line. Ah Fe's brown finger seemed to linger there.

"In the snow," she whispered, her cheek whitening like

that dim line, but her eyes sparkling like the sunshine over it.

"Allee same, John," said Ah Fe plaintively.

"Ah Fe," whispered Cissy, "take *me* with you to Hop Li."

"No good," said Ah Fe stolidly. "Hop Li, he givee this" — he indicated the envelope in his sleeve — "to next Chinaman. *He* no go. S'pose you go with me, Hop Li — you no makee nothing — allee same, makee foolee!"

"I know; but you just take me there. *Do!*"

The young girl was irresistible. Ah Fe's face relaxed.

"Allee litee!" he said, with a resigned smile.

"You wait here a moment," said Cissy, brightening. She flew up the staircase. In a few minutes she was back again. She had exchanged her smart rose-sprigged chintz for a pathetic little blue-checked frock of her school-days; the fateful hat had given way to a brown straw "flat," bent like a frame around her charming face. All the girlishness, and indeed a certain honest boyishness of her nature, seemed to have come out in her glowing, freckled cheek, brilliant, audacious eyes, and the quick stride which brought her to Ah Fe's side.

"Now let 's go," she said, "out the back way and down the side streets." She paused, cast a glance through the drawing-room at the contemplative figure of the sheriff's deputy on the veranda, and then passed out of the house forever.

. . . . . .

The excitement over the failure of Montagu Trixit's bank did not burn itself out until midnight. By that time, however, it was pretty well known that the amount of the defalcations had been exaggerated; that it had been preceded by the suspension of the "Excelsior Bank" of San Francisco, of which Trixit was also a managing director, occasioned by the discovery of the withdrawal of securities

for use in the branch bank at Cañada City; that he had fled the State eastward across the Sierras; yet that, owing to the vigilance of the police on the frontier, he had failed to escape and was in hiding. But there were adverse reports of a more sinister nature. It was said that others were implicated; that they dared not bring him to justice; it was pointed out that there was more concern among many who were not openly connected with the bank than among its unfortunate depositors. Besides the inevitable downfall of those who had invested their fortunes in it, there was distrust or suspicion everywhere. Even Trixit's enemies were forced to admit the saying that "Cañada City was the bank, and the bank was Trixit."

Perhaps this had something to do with an excited meeting of the directors of the New Mill, to whose discussions Dick Masterton, the engineer, had been hurriedly summoned. When the president told him that he had been selected to undertake the difficult and delicate mission of discovering the whereabouts of Montagu Trixit, and, if possible, procuring an interview with him, he was amazed. What had the New Mill, which had always kept itself aloof from the bank and its methods, to do with the disgraced manager? He was still more astonished when the president added bluntly: —

"Trixit holds securities of ours for money advanced to the mill by himself privately. They do not appear on the books, but if he chooses to declare them as assets of the bank, it 's a bad thing for us. If he is bold enough to keep them, he may be willing to make some arrangement with us to carry them on. If he has got away or committed suicide, as some say, it 's for you to find the whereabouts of the securities and get them. He is said to have been last seen near the Summit. You understand our position?"

Masterton did, with suppressed disgust. But he was

young, and there was the thrill of adventure in this. "I will go," he said quietly.

"We thought you would. You must take the up stage to-night. Come again and get your final instructions. By the way, you might get some information at Trixit's house. You — er — er — are acquainted with his daughter, I think?"

"Which makes it quite impossible for me to seek her for such a purpose," said Masterton coldly.

A few hours later he was on the coach. As they cleared the outskirts of the town, they passed two Chinamen plodding sturdily along in the dust of the highway.

. . . . . .

Mr. Masterton started from a slight doze in the heavy, lumbering "mountain wagon" which had taken the place of the smart Concord coach that he had left at the last station. The scenery, too, had changed; the four horses threaded their way through rocky defiles of stunted larches and hardy "brush," with here and there open patches of shrunken snow. Yet at the edge of declivities he could still see through the rolled-up leather curtains the valley below bathed in autumn, the glistening rivers half spent with the long summer drought, and the green slopes rolling upward into crest after crest of ascending pines. At times a drifting haze, always imperceptible from below, veiled the view; a chill wind blew through the vehicle, and made the steel sledge-runners that hung beneath the wagon, ready to be shipped under the useless wheels, an ominous provision. A few rude "stations," half blacksmith shops, half grocery, marked the deserted but well-worn road; a long, narrow "packer's" wagon, or a tortuous file of Chinamen carrying mysterious bundles depending from bamboo poles, was their rare and only company. The rough sheepskin jackets which these men wore over their characteristic blue blouses and their heavy leggings were a new revelation to Master-

ton, accustomed to the thinly clad coolie of the mines. They seemed a distinct race.

"I never knew those chaps get so high up, but they seem to understand the cold," he remarked.

The driver looked up, and ejaculated his disgust and his tobacco juice at the same moment.

"I reckon they 're everywhar in Californy whar you want 'em and whar you don't; you take my word for it, afore long Californy will hev to reckon that she ginerally *don't* want 'em, ef a white man has to live here. With a race tied up together in a language ye can't understand, ways that no feller knows, — from their prayin' to devils, swappin' their wives, and havin' their bones sent back to Chiny, — wot are ye goin' to do, and where are ye? Wot are ye goin' to make outer men that look so much alike ye can't tell 'em apart; that think alike and act alike, and never in ways that ye kin catch on to! Fellers knotted together in some underhand secret way o' communicatin' with each other, so that ef ye kick a Chinaman up here on the Summit, another Chinaman will squeal in the valley! And the way they do it just gets me! Look yer! I 'll tell ye somethin' that happened, that 's gospel truth! Some of the boys that reckoned to hev some fun with the Chinee gang over at Cedar Camp started out one afternoon to raid 'em. They groped along through the woods whar nobody could see 'em, kalkilatin' to come down with a rush on the camp, over two miles away. And nobody *did* see 'em, only *one* Chinaman wot they met a mile from the camp, burnin' punk to his joss or devil, and he scooted away just in the contrary direction. Well, sir, when they waltzed into that camp, darn my skin! ef there was a Chinaman there, or as much as a grain of rice to grab! Somebody had warned 'em! Well! this sort o' got the boys, and they set about discoverin' how it was done. One of 'em noticed that there was some of them bits of tissue paper

slips that they toss around at funerals lyin' along the road near the camp, and another remembered that the Chinaman they met on the hill tossed a lot of that paper in the air afore he scooted. Well, sir, the wind carried just enough of that paper straight down the hill into that camp ten minutes afore *they* could get there, to give them Chinamen warnin' — whatever it was! Fact! Why, I 've seen 'em stringin' along the road just like them fellers we passed just now, and then stop all of a suddent like hounds off the scent, jabber among themselves, and start off in a different direction " —

"Just what they 're doing now! By thunder!" interrupted another passenger, who was looking through the rolled-up curtain at his side.

All the passengers turned by one accord and looked out. The file of Chinamen under observation had indeed turned, and was even then moving rapidly away at right angles from the road.

"Got some signal, you bet!" said the driver; "some yeller paper or piece o' joss stick in the road. What?"

The remark was addressed to the passenger who had just placed his finger on his lip, and indicated a stolid-looking Chinaman, overlooked before, who was sitting in the back or "steerage" seat.

"Oh, he be darned!" said the driver impatiently. "*He* is no account; he 's only the laundryman from Rocky Cañon. I 'm talkin' of the coolie gang."

But here the conversation flagged, and the air growing keener, the flaps of the leather side curtains were battened down. Masterton gave himself up to conflicting reflections. The information that he had gathered was meagre and unsatisfactory, and he could only trust to luck and circumstance to fulfill his mission. The first glow of adventure having passed, he was uneasily conscious that the mission was not to his taste. The pretty, flushed but defiant face

of Cissy that afternoon haunted him; he had not known the immediate cause of it, but made no doubt that she had already heard the news of her father's disgrace when he met her. He regretted now that he had n't spoken to her, if only a few formal words of sympathy. He had always been half tenderly amused at her frank conceit and her "airs," — the innocent, undisguised pride of the country belle, so different from the hard *aplomb* of the city girl! And now the foolish little moth, dancing in the sunshine of prosperity, had felt the chill of winter in its pretty wings. The contempt he had for the father had hitherto shown itself in tolerant pity for the daughter, so proud of her father's position and what it brought her. In the revelation that his own directors had availed themselves of that father's methods, and the ignoble character of his present mission, he felt a stirring of self-reproach. What would become of her? Of course, frivolous as she was, she would not feel the keenness of this misfortune like another, nor yet rise superior to it. She would succumb for the present, to revive another season in a dimmer glory elsewhere. His critical, cynical observation of her had determined that any filial affection she might have would be merged and lost in the greater deprivation of her position.

A sudden darkening of the landscape below, and a singular opaque whitening of the air around them, aroused him from his thoughts. The driver drew up the collar of his overcoat and laid his whip smartly over the backs of his cattle. The air grew gradually darker, until suddenly it seemed to disintegrate into invisible gritty particles that swept through the wagon. Presently these particles became heavier, more perceptible, and polished like small shot, and a keen wind drove them stingingly into the faces of the passengers, or insidiously into their pockets, collars, or the folds of their clothes. The snow forced itself through the smallest crevice.

"We 'll get over this when once we 've passed the bend; the road seems to dip beyond," said Masterton cheerfully from his seat beside the driver.

The driver gave him a single scornful look, and turned to the passenger who occupied the seat on the other side of him. "I don't like the look o' things down there, but ef we are stuck, we 'll have to strike out for the next station."

"But," said Masterton, as the wind volleyed the sharp snow pellets in their faces and the leaders were scarcely distinguishable through the smoke-like discharges, "it can't be worse than here."

The driver did not speak, but the other passenger craned over his back, and said explanatorily: —

"I reckon ye don't know these storms; this kind o' dry snow don't stick and don't clog. Look!"

Indeed, between the volleys, Masterton could see that the road was perfectly bare and wind-swept, and except slight drifts and banks beside outlying bushes and shrubs, — which even then were again blown away before his eyes, — the level landscape was unclothed and unchanged. Where these mysterious snow pellets went to puzzled and confused him; they seemed to vanish, as they had appeared, into the air about them.

"I 'd make a straight rush for the next station," said the other passenger confidently to the driver. "If we 're stuck, we 're that much on the way; if we turn back now, we 'll have to take the grade anyway when the storm's over, and neither you nor I know when *that* 'll be. It may be only a squall just now, but it 's gettin' rather late in the season. Just pitch in and drive all ye know."

The driver laid his lash on the horses, and for a few moments the heavy vehicle dashed forward in violent conflict with the storm. At times the elastic hickory framework of its domed leather roof swayed and bent like the ribs of an umbrella; at times it seemed as if it would be lifted

bodily off; at times the whole interior of the vehicle was filled with a thin smoke by drifts through every cranny. But presently, to Masterton's great relief, the interminable level seemed to end, and between the whitened blasts he could see that the road was descending. Again the horses were urged forward, and at last he could feel that the vehicle began to add the momentum of its descent to its conflict with the storm. The blasts grew less violent, or became only the natural resistance of the air to their dominant rush. With the cessation of the snow volleys and the clearing of the atmosphere, the road became more strongly defined as it plunged downward to a terrace on the mountain flank, several hundred feet below. Presently they came again upon a thicker growth of bushes, and here and there a solitary fir. The wind died away; the cold seemed to be less bitter. Masterton, in his relief, glanced smilingly at his companions on the box, but the driver's mouth was compressed as he urged his team forward, and the other passenger looked hardly less anxious. They were now upon the level terrace, and the storm apparently spending its fury high up and behind them. But in spite of the clearing of the air, he could not but notice that it was singularly dark. What was more singular, the darkness seemed to have risen from below, and to flow in upon them as they descended. A curtain of profound obscurity, darker even than the mountain wall at their side, shut out the horizon and the valley below. But for the temperature, Masterton would have thought a thunderstorm was closing in upon them. An odd feeling of uneasiness crept over him.

A few fitful gusts now came from the obscurity; one of them was accompanied by what seemed a flight of small startled birds crossing the road ahead of them. A second larger and more sustained flight showed his astonished eyes that they were white, and each bird an enormous flake of *snow!* For an instant the air was filled with these disks,

shreds, patches, — two or three clinging together, — like the downfall shaken from a tree, striking the leather roof and sides with a dull thud, spattering the road into which they descended with large rosettes that melted away only to be followed by hundreds more that stuck and *stayed.* In five minutes the ground was white with it, the long road gleaming out ahead in the darkness; the roof and sides of the wagon were overlaid with it as with a coating of plaster of Paris; the harness of the horses, and even the reins, stood out over their steaming backs like white trappings. In five minutes more the steaming backs themselves were blanketed with it; the arms and legs of the outside passengers pinioned to the seats with it, and the arms of the driver kept free only by incessant motion. It was no longer snowing; it was "snowballing;" it was an avalanche out of the slopes of the sky. The exhausted horses floundered in it; the clogging wheels dragged in it; the vehicle at last plunged into a billow of it — and stopped.

The bewildered and half-blinded passengers hurried out into the road to assist the driver to unship the wheels and fit the steel runners in their axles. But it was too late! By the time the heavy wagon was converted into a sledge, it was deeply imbedded in wet and clinging snow. The narrow, long-handled shovels borrowed from the prospectors' kits were powerless before this heavy, half-liquid impediment. At last the driver, with an oath, relinquished the attempt, and, unhitching his horses, collected the passengers and led them forward by a narrower and more sheltered trail toward the next station, now scarce a mile away. The led horses broke a path before them, the snow fell less heavily, but it was nearly an hour before the straggling procession reached the house, and the snow-coated and exhausted passengers huddled and steamed round the red-hot stove in the bar-room. The driver had vanished with his team into the shed; Masterton's fellow passenger on the

box-seat, after a few whispered words to the landlord, also disappeared.

"I see you 've got Jake Poole with you," said one of the bar-room loungers to Masterton, indicating the passenger who had just left. "I reckon he 's here on the same fool business."

Masterton looked his surprise and mystification.

"Jake Poole, the deputy sheriff," repeated the other. "I reckon he 's here pretendin' to hunt for Montagu Trixit like the San Francisco detectives that kem up yesterday."

Masterton with difficulty repressed a start. He had heard of Poole, but did not know him by sight. "I don't think I understand," he said coolly.

"I reckon you 're a stranger in these parts," returned the lounger, looking at Masterton curiously. "Ef you war n't, ye 'd know that about the last man San Francisco or Cañada City *wanted* to ketch is Monty Trixit! He knows too much and *they* know it. But they 've got to keep up a show chase — a kind o' cirkis-ridin' — up here to satisfy the stockholders. You bet that Jake Poole hez got his orders — they might kill him to shut his mouth, ef they got an excuse — and he made a fight — but he ain't no such fool. No, sir! Why, the sickest man you ever saw was that director that kem up here with a detective when he found that Monty *had n't* left the State."

"Then he *is* hiding about here?" said Masterton, with assumed calmness.

The man paused, lowered his voice, and said: "I would n't swear he was n't a mile from whar we 're talkin' now. Why, they do allow that he 's taken a drink at this very bar *since* the news came! — and that thar 's a hoss kept handy in the stable already saddled just to tempt him ef he was inclined to scoot."

"That 's only a bluff to start him goin' so that they kin shoot him in his tracks," said a bystander.

"That ain't no good ef he has, as they *say* he has, papers stowed away with a friend that would frighten some mighty partickler men out o' their boots," returned the first speaker. "But he 's got his spies too, and thar ain't a man that crosses the Divide as ain't spotted by them. The officers brag about havin' put a cordon around the district, and yet they 've just found out that he managed to send a telegraphic dispatch from Black Rock station right under their noses. Why, only an hour or so arter the detectives and the news arrived here, thar kem along one o' them emigrant teams from Pike, and the driver said that a smart-lookin' chap in store-clothes had come out of an old prospector's cabin up thar on the rise about a mile away and asked for a newspaper. And the description the teamster gave just fitted Trixit to a T. Well, the information was give so public like that the detectives *had* to make a rush over thar, and b' gosh! although thar was n't a soul passed them but a file of Chinese coolies, when they got thar they found *nothin'*, — nothin' but them Chinamen cookin' their rice by the roadside."

Masterton smiled carelessly, and walked to the window, as if intent upon the still falling snow. But he had at once grasped the situation that seemed now almost providential for his inexperience and his mission. The man he was seeking was within his possible reach, if the story he had heard was true. The detectives would not be likely to interfere with his plans, for he was the only man who really wished to meet the fugitive. The presence of Poole made him uneasy, though he had never met the man before. Was it barely possible that he was on the same mission on behalf of others? *If* what he heard was true, there might be others equally involved with the absconding manager. But then the spies — how could the deputy sheriff elude them, and how could *he?*

He was turning impatiently away from the window when

his eye caught sight of a straggling file of Chinamen breasting the storm on their way up the hill. A sudden idea seized him. Perhaps *they* were the spies in question. He remembered the driver's story. A sudden flash of intuition made him now understand the singular way the file of coolies which they met had diverted their course after passing the wagon. They had recognized the deputy on the box. Stay! — there was another Chinaman in the coach; *he* might have given them the signal. He glanced hurriedly around the room for him; he was gone. Perhaps he had already joined the file he had just seen. His only hope was to follow them — but how? and how to do it quietly? The afternoon was waning; it would be three or four hours before the down coach would arrive, from which the driver expected assistance. Now, if ever, was his opportunity.

He made his way through the back door, and found himself among the straw and chips of the stable-yard and woodshed. Still uncertain what to do, he mechanically passed before the long shed which served as temporary stalls for the steaming wagon horses. At the further end, to his surprise, was a tethered mustang ready saddled and bridled — the opportune horse left for the fugitive, according to the lounger's story. Masterton cast a quick glance around the stable; it was deserted by all save the feeding animals.

He was new to adventures of this kind, or he would probably have weighed the possibilities and consequences. He was ordinarily a thoughtful, reflective man, but like most men of intellect, he was also imaginative and superstitious, and this crowning accident of the providential situation in which he found himself was superior to his logic. There would also be a grim irony in his taking this horse for such a purpose. He again looked and listened. There was no one within sight or hearing. He untied the rope from the bit-ring, leaped into the saddle, and emerged cau-

tiously from the shed. The wet snow muffled the sound of the horse's hoofs. Moving round to the rear of the stable so as to bring it between himself and the station, he clapped his heels into the mustang's flanks and dashed into the open.

At first he was confused and bewildered by the half-hidden boulders and snow-shrouded bushes that beset the broken ground, and dazzled by the still driving storm. But he knew that they would also divert attention from his flight, and beyond he could now see a white slope slowly rising before him, near whose crest a few dark spots were crawling in file, like Alpine climbers. They were the Chinamen he was seeking. He had reasoned that when they discovered they were followed they would, in the absence of any chance of signaling through the storm, detach one of their number to give the alarm. *Him* he would follow. He felt his revolver safe on his hip; he would use it only if necessary to intimidate the spies.

For some moments his ascent through the wet snow was slow and difficult, but as he advanced he felt a change of temperature corresponding to that he had experienced that afternoon on the wagon coming down. The air grew keener, the snow drier and finer. He kept a sharp lookout for the moving figures, and scanned the horizon for some indication of the prospector's deserted hut. Suddenly the line of figures he was watching seemed to be broken, and then gathered together as a group. Had they detected him? Evidently they had, for, as he had expected, one of them had been detached, and was now moving at right angles from the party towards the right. With a thrill of excitement he urged his horse forward; the group was far to the left, and he was nearing the solitary figure. But to his astonishment, as he approached the top of the slope he now observed another figure, as far to the left of the group as he was to the right, and that figure he could see, even at that distance, was *not* a Chinaman. He halted for a better obser-

vation; for an instant he thought it might be the fugitive himself, but as quickly he recognized it was another man — the deputy. It was *he* whom the Chinaman had discovered; it was *he* who had caused the diversion and the dispatch of the vedette to warn the fugitive. His own figure had evidently not yet been detected. His heart beat high with hope; he again dashed forward after the flying messenger, who was undoubtedly seeking the prospector's ruined hut and — Trixit.

But it was no easy matter. At this elevation the snow had formed a crust, over which the single Chinaman — a lithe young figure — skimmed like a skater, while Masterton's horse crashed through it into unexpected depths. Again, the runner could deviate by a shorter cut, while the horseman was condemned to the one-half obliterated trail. The only thing in Masterton's favor, however, was that he was steadily increasing his distance from the group and the deputy sheriff, and so cutting off their connection with the messenger. But the trail grew more and more indistinct as it neared the summit, until at last it utterly vanished. Still he kept up his speed toward the active little figure — which now seemed to be that of a mere boy — skimming over the frozen snow. Twice a stumble and flounder of the mustang through the broken crust ought to have warned him of his recklessness, but now a distinct glimpse of a low, blackened shanty, the prospector's ruined hut, toward which the messenger was making, made him forget all else. The distance was lessening between them; he could see the long pigtail of the fugitive standing out from his bent head, when suddenly his horse plunged forward and downward. In an awful instant of suspense and twilight, such as he might have seen in a dream, he felt himself pitched headlong into suffocating depths, followed by a shock, the crushing weight and steaming flank of his horse across his shoulder, utter darkness, and — merciful unconsciousness.

How long he lay there thus he never knew. With his returning consciousness came this strange twilight again, — the twilight of a dream. He was sitting in the new church at Cañada City, as he had sat the first Sunday of his arrival there, gazing at the pretty face of Cissy Trixit in the pew opposite him, and wondering who she was. Again he saw the startled, awakened light that came into her adorable eyes, the faint blush that suffused her cheek as she met his inquiring gaze, and the conscious, half-conceited, half-girlish toss of her little head as she turned her eyes away, and then a file of brown Chinamen, muttering some harsh, uncouth gibberish, interposed between them. This was followed by what seemed to be the crashing in of the church roof, a stifling heat succeeded by a long, deadly chill. But he knew that *this* last was all a dream, and he tried to struggle to his feet to see Cissy's face again, — a reality that he felt would take him out of this horrible trance, — and he called to her across the pew and heard her sweet voice again in answer, and then a wave of unconsciousness once more submerged him.

He came back to life with a sharp tingling of his whole frame as if pierced with a thousand needles. He knew he was being rubbed, and in his attempts to throw his torturers aside, he saw faintly by the light of a flickering fire that they were Chinamen, and he was lying on the floor of a rude hut. With his first movements they ceased, and, wrapping him like a mummy in warm blankets, dragged him out of the heap of loose snow with which they had been rubbing him, toward the fire that glowed upon the large adobe hearth. The stinging pain was succeeded by a warm glow; a pleasant languor, which made even thought a burden, came over him, and yet his perceptions were keenly alive to his surroundings. He heard the Chinamen mutter something and then depart, leaving him alone. But presently he was aware of another figure that had entered,

and was now sitting with its back to him at a rude table, roughly extemporized from a packing-box, apparently engaged in writing. It was a small Chinaman, evidently the one he had chased! The events of the past few hours — his mission, his intentions, and every incident of the pursuit — flashed back upon him. Where was he? What was he doing here? Had Trixit escaped him?

In his exhausted state he was unable to formulate a question which even then he doubted if the Chinaman could understand. So he simply watched him lazily, and with a certain kind of fascination, until he should finish his writing and turn round. His long pigtail, which seemed ridiculously disproportionate to his size, — the pigtail which he remembered had streamed into the air in his flight, — had partly escaped from the dish-covered hat under which it had been coiled. But what was singular, it was not the wiry black pigtail of his Mongolian fellows, but soft and silky, and as the firelight played upon it, it seemed of a shining chestnut brown! It was like — like — he stopped — was he dreaming again? A long sigh escaped him.

The figure instantly turned. He started. It was Cissy Trixit! There was no mistaking that charming, sensitive face, glowing with health and excitement, albeit showing here and there the mark of the pigment with which it had been stained, now hurriedly washed off. A little of it had run into the corners of her eyelids, and enhanced the brilliancy of her eyes.

He found his tongue with an effort. "What are you doing here?" he asked with a faint voice, and a fainter attempt to smile.

"That 's what I might ask about you," she said pertly, but with a slight touch of scorn; "but I guess I know as well as I do about the others. I came here to see my father," she added defiantly.

"And you are the — the — one — I chased?"

"Yes; and I 'd have outrun you easily, even with your horse to help you," she said proudly, "only I turned back when you went down into that prospector's hole with your horse and his broken neck atop of you."

He groaned slightly, but more from shame than pain. The young girl took up a glass of whiskey ready on the table and brought it to him. "Take that; it will fetch you all right in a moment. Popper says no bones are broken."

Masterton waived the proffered glass. "Your father — is he here?" he asked hurriedly, recalling his mission.

"Not now; he 's gone to the station — to — fetch — my clothes," she said, with a little laugh.

"To the station?" repeated Masterton, bewildered.

"Yes," she replied, "to the station. Of course you don't know the news," she added, with an air of girlish importance. "They 've stopped all proceedings against him, and he 's as free as you are."

Masterton tried to rise, but another groan escaped him. He was really in pain. Cissy's bright eyes softened. She knelt beside him, her soft breath fanning his hair, and lifted him gently to a sitting position.

"Oh, I 've done it before," she laughed, as she read his wonder, with his gratitude, in his eyes. "The horse was already stiff, and you were nearly so, by the time I came up to you and got" — she laughed again — "the *other* Chinaman to help me pull you out of that hole."

"I know I owe you my life," he said, his face flushing.

"It was lucky I was there," she returned naïvely; "perhaps lucky you were chasing me."

"I 'm afraid that of the many who would run after you I should be the least lucky," he said, with an attempt to laugh that did not, however, conceal his mortification; "but I assure you that I only wished to have an interview

with your father, — a *business* interview, perhaps as much in his interest as my own."

The old look of audacity came back to her face. "I guess that 's what they all came here for, except one, but it did n't keep them from believing and saying he was a thief behind his back. Yet they all wanted his — confidence," she added bitterly.

Masterton felt that his burning cheeks were confessing the truth of this. "You excepted one," he said hesitatingly.

"Yes — the deputy sheriff. He came to help *me.*"

"You!"

"Yes, *me!*" A coquettish little toss of her head added to his confusion. "He threw up his job just to follow me, without my knowing it, to see that I did n't come to any harm. He saw me only once, too, at the house when he came to take possession. He said he thought I was 'clear grit' to risk everything to find father, and he said he saw it in me when he was there; that 's how he guessed where I was gone when I ran away, and followed me."

"He was as right as he was lucky," said Masterton gravely. "But how did you get here?"

She slipped down on the floor beside him with an unconscious movement that her masculine garments only made the more quaintly girlish, and, clasping her knee with both hands, looked at the fire as she rocked herself slightly backward and forward as she spoke.

"It will shock a proper man like you, I know," she began demurely, "but I came *alone*, with only a Chinaman to guide me. I got these clothes from our laundryman, so that I should n't attract attention. I would have got a Chinese lady's dress, but I could n't walk in *their* shoes," — she looked down at her little feet encased in wooden sandals, — "and I had a long way to walk. But even if I did n't look quite right to Chinamen, no white man was able to detect the difference. You passed me twice in the

stage, and you did n't know me. I traveled night and day, most of the time walking, and being passed along from one Chinaman to another, or, when we were alone, being slung on a pole between two coolies like a bale of goods. I ate what they could give me, for I dared not go into a shop or a restaurant; I could n't shut my eyes in their dens, so I stayed awake all night. Yet I got ahead of you and the sheriff, — though I did n't know at the time what *you* were after," she added presently.

He was overcome with wondering admiration of her courage, and of self-reproach at his own short-sightedness. This was the girl he had looked upon as a spoiled village beauty, satisfied with her small triumphs and provincial elevation, and void of all other purpose. Here she was — the all-unconscious heroine — and he her critic helpless at her feet! It was not a cheerful reflection, and yet he took a certain delight in his expiation. Perhaps he had half believed in her without knowing it. What could he do or say? I regret to say he dodged the question meanly.

"And you think your disguise escaped detection?" he said, looking markedly at her escaped braid of hair.

She followed his eyes rather than his words, half pettishly caught up the loosened braid, swiftly coiled it around the top of her head, and, clapping the weather-beaten and battered conical hat back again upon it, defiantly said: "Yes! Everybody is n't as critical as you are, and even you would n't be — of a Chinaman!"

He had never seen her except when she was arrayed with the full intention to affect the beholders and perfectly conscious of her attractions; he was utterly unprepared for this complete ignoring of adornment now, albeit he was for the first time aware how her real prettiness made it unnecessary. She looked fully as charming in this grotesque head-covering as she had in that paragon of fashion, the new hat, which had excited his tolerant amusement.

"I 'm afraid I 'm a very poor critic," he said bluntly. "I never conceived that this sort of thing was at all to your taste."

"I came to see my father because I wanted to," she said, with equal bluntness.

"And I came to see him though I *did n't* want to," he said, with a cynical laugh.

She turned, and fixed her brown eyes inquiringly upon him.

"Why did you come, then?"

"I was ordered by my directors."

"Then you did not believe he was a thief?" she asked, her eyes softening.

"It would ill become me to accuse your father — or my directors," he answered diplomatically.

She was quick enough to detect the suggestion of moral superiority in his tone, but woman enough to forgive it. "You 're no friend of Windibrook," she said, "I know."

"I am not," he replied frankly.

"If you would like to see my popper, I can manage it," she said hesitatingly. "He 'll do anything for me," she added, with a touch of her old pride.

"Who could blame him?" returned Masterton gravely. "But if he is a free man now, and able to go where he likes, and to see whom he likes, he may not care to give an audience to a mere messenger."

"You wait and let me see him first," said the girl quickly. Then, as the sound of sleigh-bells came from the road outside, she added, "Here he is. I 'll get your clothes; they are out here drying by the fire in the shed." She disappeared through a back door, and returned presently bearing his dried garments. "Dress yourself while I take popper into the shed," she said quickly, and ran out into the road.

Masterton dressed himself with difficulty. Although

circulation was now restored, and he felt a glow through his warmed clothes, he had been sorely bruised and shaken by his fall. He had scarcely finished dressing when Montagu Trixit entered from the shed. Masterton looked at him with a new interest and a respect he had never felt before. There certainly was little of the daughter in this keen-faced, resolute-lipped man, though his brown eyes, like hers, had the same frank, steadfast audacity. With a business brevity that was hurried but not unkindly, he hoped Masterton had fully recovered.

"Thanks to your daughter, I 'm all right now," said Masterton. "I need not tell you that I believe I owe my life to her energy and courage, for I think you have experienced what she can do in that way. But *you* have had the advantage of those who have only enjoyed her social acquaintance in knowing all the time what she was capable of," he added significantly.

"She is a good girl," said Trixit briefly, yet with a slight rise in color on his dark, sallow cheek, and a sudden wavering of his steadfast eyes. "She tells me you have a message from your directors. I think I know what it is, but we won't discuss it now. As I am going directly to Sacramento, I shall not see them, but I will give you an answer to take to them when we reach the station. I am going to give you a lift there when my daughter is ready. And here she is."

It was the old Cissy that stepped into the room, dressed as she was when she left her father's house two days before. Oddly enough, he fancied that something of her old conscious manner had returned with her clothes, and as he stepped with her into the back seat of the covered sleigh in waiting, he could not help saying, "I really think I understand you better in your other clothes."

A slight blush mounted to Cissy's cheek, but her eyes were still audacious. "All the same, I don't think you 'd

like to walk down Main Street with me in that rig, although you once thought nothing of taking me over your old mill in your blue blouse and overalls." And having apparently greatly relieved her proud little heart by this enigmatic statement, she grew so chatty and confidential that the young man was satisfied that he had been in love with her from the first.

When they reached the station, Trixit drew him aside. Taking an envelope marked "Private Contracts" from his pocket, he opened it and displayed some papers. "These are the securities. Tell your directors that you have seen them safe in my hands, and that no one else has seen them. Tell them that if they will send me their renewed notes, dated from to-day, to Sacramento within the next three days, I will return the securities. That is my message."

The young man bowed. But before the coach started he managed to draw near to Cissy. "You are not returning to Cañada City," he said.

The young girl made a gesture of indignation. "No! I am never going there again. I go with my popper to Sacramento."

"Then I suppose I must say 'good-by.'"

The girl looked at him in surprise. "Popper says you are coming to Sacramento in three days!"

"Am I?"

He looked at her fixedly. She returned his glance audaciously, steadfastly.

"You are," she said, in her low but distinct voice.

"I will."

And he did.

A JACK AND JILL OF THE SIERRAS

It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and the hottest hour of the day on that Sierran foothill. The western sun, streaming down the mile-long slope of close-set pine crests, had been caught on an outlying ledge of glaring white quartz, covered with mining tools and débris, and seemed to have been thrown into an incandescent rage. The air above it shimmered and became visible. A white canvas tent on it was an object not to be borne; the steel-tipped picks and shovels, intolerable to touch and eyesight, and a tilted tin prospecting pan, falling over, flashed out as another sun of insufferable effulgence. At such moments the five members of the "Eureka Mining Company" prudently withdrew to the nearest pine tree, which cast a shadow so sharply defined on the glistening sand that the impingement of a hand or finger beyond that line cut like a knife. The men lay, or squatted, in this shadow, feverishly puffing their pipes and waiting for the sun to slip beyond the burning ledge. Yet so irritating was the dry air, fragrant with the aroma of the heated pines, that occasionally one would start up and walk about until he had brought on that profuse perspiration which gave a momentary relief, and, as he believed, saved him from sunstroke. Suddenly a voice exclaimed querulously: —

"Derned if the blasted bucket ain't empty ag'in! Not a drop left, by Jimminy!"

A stare of helpless disgust was exchanged by the momentarily uplifted heads; then every man lay down again, as if trying to erase himself.

"Who brought the last?" demanded the foreman.

"*I* did," said a reflective voice coming from a partner lying comfortably on his back, "and if anybody reckons I 'm going to face Tophet ag'in down that slope, he 's mistaken!" The speaker was thirsty — but he had principles.

"We must throw round for it," said the foreman, taking the dice from his pocket.

He cast; the lowest number fell to Parkhurst, a florid, full-blooded Texan. "All right, gentlemen," he said, wiping his forehead, and lifting the tin pail with a resigned air, "only *ef* anything comes to me on that bare stretch o' stage road, — and I 'm kinder seein' things spotty and black now, — remember you ain't anywhar *nearer* the water than you were! I ain't sayin' it for myself — but it mout be rough on *you* — and" —

"Give *me* the pail," interrupted a tall young fellow, rising. "I 'll risk it."

Cries of "Good old Ned," and "Hunky boy!" greeted him as he took the pail from the perspiring Parkhurst, who at once lay down again. "You may n't be a professin' Christian, in good standin', Ned Bray," continued Parkhurst from the ground, "but you 're about as white as they make 'em, and you 're goin' to do a Heavenly Act! I repeat it, gents — a Heavenly Act!"

Without a reply Bray walked off with the pail, stopping only in the underbrush to pluck a few soft fronds of fern, part of which he put within the crown of his hat, and stuck the rest in its band around the outer brim, making a parasol-like shade above his shoulders. Thus equipped he passed through the outer fringe of pines to a rocky trail which began to descend towards the stage road. Here he was in the full glare of the sun and its reflection from the heated rocks, which scorched his feet and pricked his bent face into a rash. The descent was steep and necessarily

slow from the slipperiness of the desiccated pine needles that had fallen from above. Nor were his troubles over when, a few rods further, he came upon the stage road, which here swept in a sharp curve round the flank of the mountain. Its red dust, ground by heavy wagons and pack-trains into a fine powder, was nevertheless so heavy with some metallic substance that it scarcely lifted with the foot, and he was obliged to literally wade through it. Yet there were two hundred yards of this road to be passed before he could reach that point of its bank where a narrow and precipitous trail dropped diagonally from it, to creep along the mountain side to the spring he was seeking.

When he reached the trail, he paused to take breath and wipe the blinding beads of sweat from his eyes before he cautiously swung himself over the bank into it. A single misstep here would have sent him headlong to the tops of pine trees a thousand feet below. Holding his pail in one hand, with the other he steadied himself by clutching the ferns and brambles at his side, and at last reached the spring — a niche in the mountain side with a ledge scarcely four feet wide. He had merely accomplished the ordinary gymnastic feat performed by the members of the Eureka Company four or five times a day! But the day was exceptionally hot. He held his wrists to cool their throbbing pulses in the clear, cold stream that gurgled into its rocky basin; he threw the water over his head and shoulders; he swung his legs over the ledge and let the overflow fall on his dusty shoes and ankles. Gentle and delicious rigors came over him. He sat with half-closed eyes looking across the dark olive depths of the cañon between him and the opposite mountain. A hawk was swinging lazily above it, apparently within a stone's throw of him; he knew it was at least a mile away. Thirty feet above him ran the stage road; he could hear quite distinctly the slow thud of hoofs, the dull jar of harness, and the labored creaking of the

Pioneer Coach as it crawled up the long ascent, part of which he had just passed. He thought of it, — a slow drifting cloud of dust and heat, as he had often seen it, abandoned by even its passengers, who sought shelter in the wayside pines as they toiled behind it to the summit, — and hugged himself in the grateful shadows of the spring. It had passed out of hearing and thought, he had turned to fill his pail, when he was startled by a shower of dust and gravel from the road above, and the next moment he was thrown violently down, blinded and pinned against the ledge by the fall of some heavy body on his back and shoulders. His last flash of consciousness was that he had been struck by a sack of flour slipped from the pack of some passing mule.

How long he remained unconscious he never knew. It was probably not long, for his chilled hands and arms, thrust by the blow on his shoulders into the pool of water, assisted in restoring him. He came to with a sense of suffocating pressure on his back, but his head and shoulders were swathed in utter darkness by the folds of some soft fabrics and draperies, which, to his connecting consciousness, seemed as if the contents of a broken bale or trunk had also fallen from the pack. With a tremendous effort he succeeded in getting his arm out of the pool, and attempted to free his head from its blinding enwrappings. In doing so his hand suddenly touched human flesh — a soft, bared arm! With the same astounding discovery came one more terrible; that arm belonged to the weight that was pressing him down; and now, assisted by his struggles, it was slowly slipping toward the brink of the ledge and the abyss below! With a desperate effort he turned on his side, caught the body, — as such it was, — dragged it back on the ledge, at the same moment that, freeing his head from its covering, — a feminine skirt, — he discovered it was a woman!

She had been also unconscious, although the touch of his cold, wet hand on her skin had probably given her a shock that was now showing itself in a convulsive shudder of her shoulders and half opening of her eyes. Suddenly she began to stare at him, to draw in her knees and feet toward her, sideways, with a feminine movement, as she smoothed out her skirt, and kept it down with a hand on which she leaned. She was a tall, handsome girl, from what he could judge of her half-sitting figure in her torn silk dust-cloak, which, although its cape and one sleeve were split into ribbons, had still protected her delicate, well-fitting gown beneath. She was evidently a lady.

"What — is it? — what has happened?" she said faintly, yet with a slight touch of formality in her manner.

"You must have fallen — from the road above," said Bray hesitatingly.

"From the road above?" she repeated, with a slight frown, as if to concentrate her thought. She glanced upward, then at the ledge before her, and then, for the first time, at the darkening abyss below. The color, which had begun to return, suddenly left her face here, and she drew instinctively back against the mountain side. "Yes," she half murmured to herself, rather than to him, "it must be so. I was walking too near the bank — and — I fell!" Then turning to him, she said, "And you found me lying here when you came."

"I think," stammered Bray, "that I was here when you fell, and I — I broke the fall." He was sorry for it a moment afterward.

She lifted her handsome gray eyes to him, saw the dust, dirt, and leaves on his back and shoulders, the collar of his shirt torn open, and a few spots of blood from a bruise on his forehead. Her black eyebrows straightened again as she said coldly, "Dear me! I am very sorry; I could n't help it, you know. I hope you are not otherwise hurt."

"No," he replied quickly. "But you, are you sure you are not injured? It must have been a terrible shock."

"I 'm not hurt," she said, helping herself to her feet by the aid of the mountain-side bushes, and ignoring his proffered hand. "But," she added quickly and impressively, glancing upward toward the stage road overhead, "why don't they come? They must have missed me! I must have been here a long time; it 's too bad!"

"*They* missed you?" he repeated diffidently.

"Yes," she said impatiently, "of course! I was n't alone. Don't you understand? I got out of the coach to walk uphill on the bank under the trees. It was so hot and stuffy. My foot must have slipped up there — and — I — slid — down. Have you heard any one calling me? Have you called out yourself?"

Mr. Bray did not like to say he had only just recovered consciousness. He smiled vaguely and foolishly. But on turning around in her impatience, she caught sight of the chasm again, and lapsed quite white against the mountain side.

"Let me give you some water from the spring," he said eagerly, as she sank again to a sitting posture; "it will refresh you."

He looked hesitatingly around him; he had neither cup nor flask, but he filled the pail and held it with great dexterity to her lips. She drank a little, extracted a lace handkerchief from some hidden pocket, dipped its point in the water, and wiped her face delicately, after a certain feline fashion. Then, catching sight of some small object in the fork of a bush above her, she quickly pounced upon it, and with a swift sweep of her hand under her skirt, put on *her fallen slipper*, and stood on her feet again.

"How does one get out of such a place?" she asked fretfully; and then, glancing at him half indignantly, "why don't you shout?"

"I was going to tell you," he said gently, "that when you are a little stronger, we can get out by the way I came in, — along the trail."

He pointed to the narrow pathway along the perilous incline. Somehow, with this tall, beautiful creature beside him, it looked more perilous than before. She may have thought so too, for she drew in her breath sharply and sank down again.

"Is there no other way?"

"None!"

"How did *you* happen to be here?" she asked suddenly, opening her gray eyes upon him. "What did you come here for?" she went on, almost impertinently.

"To fetch a pail of water." He stopped, and then it suddenly occurred to him that after all there was no reason for his being bullied by this tall, good-looking girl, even if he *had* saved her. He gave a little laugh, and added mischievously, "Just like Jack and Jill, you know."

"What?" she said sharply, bending her black brows at him.

"Jack and Jill," he returned carelessly; "*I* broke my crown, you know, and *you*," — he did not finish.

She stared at him, trying to keep her face and her composure; but a smile, that on her imperious lips he thought perfectly adorable, here lifted the corners of her mouth, and she turned her face aside. But the smile, and the line of dazzling little teeth it revealed, were unfortunately on the side toward him. Emboldened by this, he went on, "I could n't think what had happened. At first I had a sort of idea that part of a mule's pack had fallen on top of me, — blankets, flour, and all that sort of thing, you know, until" —

Her smile had vanished. "Well," she said impatiently, "until?"

"Until I touched you. I 'm afraid I gave you a shock; my hand was dripping from the spring."

She colored so quickly that he knew she must have been conscious at the time, and he noticed now that the sleeve of her cloak, which had been half torn off her bare arm, was pinned together over it. When and how had she managed to do it without his detecting the act?

"At all events," she said coldly, "I 'm glad you have not received greater injury from — your mule pack."

"I think we 've both been very lucky," he said simply.

She did not reply, but remained looking furtively at the narrow trail. Then she listened. "I thought I heard voices," she said, half rising.

"Shall I shout?" he asked.

"No! You say there 's no use — there 's only this way out of it!"

"I might go up first, and perhaps get assistance — a rope or chair," he suggested.

"And leave me here alone?" she cried, with a horrified glance at the abyss. "No, thank you! I should be over that ledge before you came back! There 's a dreadful fascination in it even now. No! I think I 'd rather go — at once! I never shall be stronger as long as I stay near it; I may be weaker."

She gave a petulant little shiver, and then, though paler and evidently agitated, composed her tattered and dusty outer garments in a deft, ladylike way, and leaned back against the mountain side. He saw her also glance at his loosened shirt front and hanging neckerchief, and with a heightened color he quickly re-knotted it around his throat. They moved from the ledge toward the trail. Suddenly she started back.

"But it 's only wide enough for *one*, and I never — *never* — could even stand on it a minute alone!" she exclaimed.

He looked at her critically. "We will go together, side by side," he said quietly, "but you will have to take the outside."

"Outside!" she repeated, recoiling. "Impossible! I shall fall."

"I shall keep hold of you," he explained; "you need not fear that. Stop! I 'll make it safer." He untied the large bandanna silk handkerchief which he wore around his shoulders, knotted one end of it firmly to his belt, and handed her the other.

"Do you think you can hold on to that?"

"I — don't know" — she hesitated. "If I should fall?"

"Stay a moment! Is your belt strong?" He pointed to a girdle of yellow leather which caught her tunic around her small waist.

"Yes," she said eagerly, "it 's real leather."

He gently slipped the edge of the handkerchief under it and knotted it. They were thus linked together by a foot of handkerchief.

"I feel much safer," she said, with a faint smile.

"But if *I* should fall," he remarked, looking into her eyes, "you would go too! Have you thought of that?"

"Yes." Her previous charming smile returned. "It would be really Jack and Jill this time."

They passed out on the trail. "Now I must take *your* arm," he said laughingly; "not you *mine*." He passed his arm under hers, holding it firmly. It was the one he had touched. For the first few steps her uncertain feet took no hold of the sloping mountain side, which seemed to slip sideways beneath her. He was literally carrying her on his shoulder. But in a few moments she saw how cleverly he balanced himself, always leaning toward the hillside, and presently she was able to help him by a few steps. She expressed her surprise at his skill.

"It 's nothing; I carry a pail of water up here without spilling a drop."

She stiffened slightly under this remark, and indeed so far overdid her attempt to walk without his aid, that her foot slipped on a stone, and she fell outward toward the abyss. But in an instant his arm was transferred from her elbow to her waist, and in the momentum of his quick recovery they both landed panting against the mountain side.

"I 'm afraid you 'd have spilt the pail that time," she said, with a slightly heightened color, as she disengaged herself gently from his arm.

"No," he answered boldly, "for the pail never would have stiffened itself in a tiff, and tried to go alone."

"Of course not, if it were only a pail," she responded.

They moved on again in silence. The trail was growing a little steeper toward the upper end and the road bank. Bray was often himself obliged to seek the friendly aid of a manzanita or thornbush to support them. Suddenly she stopped and caught his arm. "There!" she said. "Listen! They 're coming!"

Bray listened; he could hear at intervals a far-off shout; then a nearer one — a name — "Eugenia." So that was *hers!*

"Shall I shout back?" he asked.

"Not yet!" she answered. "Are we near the top?" A sudden glow of pleasure came over him — he knew not why, except that she did not look delighted, excited, or even relieved.

"Only a few yards more," he said, with an unaffected half sigh.

"Then I 'd better untie this," she suggested, beginning to fumble at the knot of the handkerchief which linked them.

Their heads were close together, their fingers often met; he would have liked to say something, but he could only

add: "Are you sure you will feel quite safe? It is a little steeper as we near the bank."

"You can hold me," she replied simply, with a superbly unconscious lifting of her arm, as she yielded her waist to him again, but without raising her eyes.

He did, — holding her rather tightly, I fear, as they clambered up the remaining slope, for it seemed to him as a last embrace. As he lifted her to the road bank, the shouts came nearer; and glancing up, he saw two men and a woman running down the hill toward them. He turned to Eugenia. In that instant she had slipped the tattered dust-coat from her shoulder, thrown it over her arm, set her hat straight, and was calmly awaiting them with a self-possession and coolness that seemed to shame their excitement. He noticed, too, with the quick perception of unimportant things which comes to some natures at such moments, that she had plucked a sprig of wild myrtle from the mountain side, and was wearing it on her breast.

"Goodness Heavens! Genie! What has happened! Where have you been?"

"Eugenia! this is perfect madness!" began the elder man didactically. "You have alarmed us beyond measure — kept the stage waiting, and now it is gone!"

"Genie! Look here, I say! We 've been hunting for you everywhere. What 's up?" said the younger man, with brotherly brusqueness.

As these questions were all uttered in the same breath, Eugenia replied to them collectively. "It was so hot that I kept along the bank here, while you were on the other side. I heard the trickle of water somewhere down there, and searching for it my foot slipped. This gentleman" — she indicated Bray — "was on a little sort of trail there, and assisted me back to the road again."

The two men and the woman turned and stared at Bray with a look of curiosity that changed quickly into a half-

contemptuous unconcern. They saw a youngish sort of man, with a long mustache, a two days' growth of beard, a not overclean face, that was further streaked with red on the temple, a torn flannel shirt, that showed a very white shoulder beside a sunburnt throat and neck, and soiled white trousers stuck into muddy high boots — in fact, the picture of a broken-down miner. But their unconcern was as speedily changed again into resentment at the perfect ease and equality with which he regarded them, — a regard the more exasperating as it was not without a suspicion of his perception of some satire or humor in the situation.

"Ahem! very much obliged, I am sure. I — er" —

"The lady has thanked me," interrupted Bray, with a smile.

"Did you fall far?" said the younger man to Eugenia, ignoring Bray.

"Not far," she answered, with a half-appealing look at Bray.

"Only a few feet," added the latter, with prompt mendacity, "just a little slip down."

The three newcomers here turned away, and, surrounding Eugenia, conversed in an undertone. Quite conscious that he was the subject of discussion, Bray lingered only in the hope of catching a parting glance from Eugenia. The words "*You* do it," "No, *you!*" "It would come better from *her*," were distinctly audible to him. To his surprise, however, she suddenly broke through them, and advancing to him, with a dangerous brightness in her beautiful eyes, held out her slim hand. "My father, Mr. Neworth, my brother, Harry Neworth, and my aunt, Mrs. Dobbs," she said, indicating each one with a graceful inclination of her handsome head, "all think I ought to give you something and send you away. I believe that is the way they put it. *I* think differently! I come to ask you to let me once more thank you for your good service to me to-day — which

I shall never forget." When he had returned her firm handclasp for a minute, she coolly rejoined the discomfited group.

"She 's no sardine," said Bray to himself emphatically, "but I suspect she 'll catch it from her folks for this. I ought to have gone away at once, like a gentleman, hang it!"

He was even angrily debating with himself whether he ought not to follow her to protect her from her gesticulating relations as they all trailed up the hill with her, when he reflected that it would only make matters worse. And with it came the dreadful reflection that as yet he had not carried the water to his expecting and thirsty comrades. He had forgotten them for these lazy, snobbish, purse-proud San Franciscans — for Bray had the miner's supreme contempt for the moneyed trading classes. What would the boys think of him! He flung himself over the bank, and hastened recklessly down the trail to the spring. But here again he lingered — the place had become suddenly hallowed. How deserted it looked without her! He gazed eagerly around on the ledge for any trace that she had left — a bow, a bit of ribbon, or even a hairpin that had fallen from her.

As the young man slowly filled the pail he caught sight of his own reflection in the spring. It certainly was not that of an Adonis! He laughed honestly; his sense of humor had saved him from many an extravagance, and mitigated many a disappointment before this. Well! She was a plucky, handsome girl — even if she was not for him, and he might never set eyes on her again. Yet it was a hard pull up that trail once more, carrying an insensible pail of water in the hand that had once sustained a lovely girl! He remembered her reply to his badinage, "Of course not — if it were only a pail," and found a dozen pretty interpretations of it. Yet he was not in love! No! He was

too poor and too level headed for that! And he was unaffectedly and materially tired, too, when he reached the road again, and rested, leaving the spring and its little idyl behind.

By this time the sun had left the burning ledge of the Eureka Company, and the stage road was also in shadow, so that his return through its heavy dust was less difficult. And when he at last reached the camp, he found to his relief that his prolonged absence had been overlooked by his thirsty companions in a larger excitement and disappointment; for it appeared that a well-known San Francisco capitalist, whom the foreman had persuaded to visit their claim with a view to advance and investment, had actually come over from Red Dog for that purpose, and had got as far as the summit when he was stopped by an accident, and delayed so long that he was obliged to go on to Sacramento without making his examination.

"That was only his excuse — mere flapdoodle!" interrupted the pessimistic Jerrold. "He was foolin' you; he 'd heard of suthin' better! The idea of calling that affair an 'accident,' or one that would stop any man who meant business!"

Bray had become uneasily conscious. "What was the accident?" he asked.

"A d——d fool woman's accident," broke in the misogynist Parkhurst, "and it 's true! That 's what makes it so cussed mean. For there 's allus a woman at the bottom of such things — bet your life! Think of 'em comin' here. Thar ought to be a law ag'in' it."

"But what was it?" persisted Bray, becoming more apprehensive.

"Why, what does that blasted fool of a capitalist do but bring with him his daughter and auntie to 'see the wonderful scenery with popa dear!' as if it was a cheap Sunday-school panorama! And what do these chuckle-headed

women do but get off the coach and go to wanderin' about, and playin' 'here we go round the mulberry bush' until one of 'em tumbles down a ravine. And then there 's a great to do! and 'dear popa' was up and down the road yellin' 'Me cheyld! me cheyld!' And then there was camphor and sal volatile and eau de cologne to be got, and the coach goes off, and 'popa dear' gets left, and then has to hurry off in a buggy to catch it. So *we* get left too, just because that God-forsaken fool, Neworth, brings his women here."

Under this recital poor Bray sat as completely crushed as when the fair daughter of Neworth had descended upon his shoulders at the spring. He saw it all! *His* was the fault. It was *his* delay and dalliance with her that had checked Neworth's visit; worse than that, it was his subsequent audacity and her defense of him that would probably prevent any renewal of the negotiations. He had shipwrecked his partners' prospects in his absurd vanity and pride! He did not dare to raise his eyes to their dejected faces. He would have confessed everything to them, but the same feeling of delicacy for her which had determined him to keep her adventures to himself now forever sealed his lips. How might they not misconstrue his conduct — and *hers!* Perhaps something of this was visible in his face.

"Come, old man," said the cheerful misogynist, with perfect innocence, "don't take it so hard. Some time in a man's life a woman 's sure to get the drop on him, as I said afore, and this yer woman 's got the drop on five of us! But — hallo, Ned, old man — what 's the matter with your head?" He laid his hand gently on the matted temple of his younger partner.

"I had — a slip — on the trail," he stammered. "Had to go back again for another pailful. That 's what delayed me, you know, boys," he added. "But it 's nothing!"

"Nothing!" ejaculated Parkhurst, clapping him on the back and twisting him around by the shoulders so that he faced his companions. "Nothing! Look at him, gentlemen; and he says it 's ' nothing.' That 's how a *man* takes it! *He* did n't go round yellin' and wringin' his hands and sayin' ' Me pay-l! me pay-l!' when it spilt! He just humped himself and trotted back for another. And yet every drop of water in that overset bucket meant hard work and hard sweat, and was as precious as gold."

Luckily for Bray, whose mingled emotions under Parkhurst's eloquence were beginning to be hysterical, the foreman interrupted.

"Well, boys! it 's time we got to work again, and took another heave at the old ledge! But now that this job of Neworth's is over — I don't mind tellin' ye suthin'." As their leader usually spoke but little, and to the point, the four men gathered around him. "Although I engineered this affair, and got it up, somehow I never *saw* that Neworth standing on this ledge! No, boys! I never saw him *here.*" The look of superstition which Bray and the others had often seen on this old miner's face, and which so often showed itself in his acts, was there. "And though I wanted him to come, and allowed to have him come, I 'm kinder relieved that he did n't, and so let whatsoever luck 's in the air come to us five alone, boys, just as we stand."

The next morning Bray was up before his companions, and although it was not his turn, offered to bring water from the spring. He was not in love with Eugenia — he had not forgotten his remorse of the previous day — but he would like to go there once more before he relentlessly wiped out her image from his mind. And he had heard that although Neworth had gone on to Sacramento, his son and the two ladies had stopped on for a day or two at the ditch superintendent's house on the summit, only two miles away. She might pass on the road; he might get a glimpse

of her again and a wave of her hand before this thing was over forever, and he should have to take up the daily routine of his work again. It was not love — of *that* he was assured — but it was the way to stop it by convincing himself of its madness. Besides, in view of all the circumstances, it was his duty as a gentleman to show some concern for her condition after the accident and the disagreeable *contretemps* which followed it.

Thus Bray! Alas, none of these possibilities occurred. He found the spring had simply lapsed into its previous unsuggestive obscurity, — a mere niche in the mountain side that held only — water! The stage road was deserted save for an early, curly-headed schoolboy, whom he found lurking on the bank, but who evaded his company and conversation. He returned to the camp quite cured of his fancy. His late zeal as a water-carrier had earned him a day or two's exemption from that duty. His place was taken the next afternoon by the woman-hating Parkhurst, and he was the less concerned by it as he had heard that the same afternoon the ladies were to leave the summit for Sacramento.

But then occurred a singular coincidence. The new water-bringer was as scandalously late in his delivery of the precious fluid as his predecessor! An hour passed and he did not return. His unfortunate partners, toiling away with pick and crowbar on the burning ledge, were clamorous from thirst, and Bray was becoming absurdly uneasy. It could not be possible that Eugenia's accident had been repeated! Or had she met him with inquiries? But no! she was already gone. The mystery was presently cleared, however, by the abrupt appearance of Parkhurst running towards them, but *without his pail!* The cry of consternation and despair which greeted that discovery was, however, quickly changed by a single breathless, half-intelligible sentence he had shot before him from his panting lips.

And he was holding something in his outstretched palm that was more eloquent than words. Gold!

In an instant they had him under the shade of the pine tree, and were squatting round him like schoolboys. He was profoundly agitated. His story, far from being brief, was incoherent and at times seemed irrelevant, but that was characteristic. They would remember that he had always held the theory that, even in quartz mining, the deposits were always found near water, past or present, with signs of fluvial erosion! He didn't call himself one of your blanked scientific miners, but his head was level! It was all very well for them to say "Yes, yes!" *now*, but they didn't use to! Well! when he got to the spring, he noticed that there had been a kind of landslide above it, of course, from water cleavage, and there was a distinct mark of it on the mountain side, where it had uprooted and thrown over some small bushes!

Excited as Bray was, he recognized with a hysterical sensation the track made by Eugenia in her fall, which he himself had noticed. But he had thought only of *her*.

"When I saw that," continued Parkhurst, more rapidly and coherently, "I saw that there was a crack above the hole where the water came through — as if it had been the old channel of the spring. I widened it a little with my clasp knife, and then — in a little pouch or pocket of decomposed quartz — I found that! Not only that, boys," he continued, rising, with a shout, "but the whole slope above the spring is a mass of seepage underneath, as if you'd played a hydraulic hose on it, and it's ready to tumble and is just rotten with quartz!"

The men leaped to their feet; in another moment they had snatched picks, pans, and shovels, and, the foreman leading, with a coil of rope thrown over his shoulders, were all flying down the trail to the highway. Their haste was wise. The spring was not on *their* claim; it was known

to others; it was doubtful if Parkhurst's discovery with his knife amounted to actual *work* on the soil. They must "take it up" with a formal notice, and get to work at once!

In an hour they were scattered over the mountain side, like bees clinging to the fragrant slope of laurel and myrtle above the spring. An excavation was made beside it, and the ledge broadened by a dozen feet. Even the spring itself was utilized to wash the hastily filled prospecting pans. And when the Pioneer Coach slowly toiled up the road that afternoon, the passengers stared at the scarcely dry "Notice of Location" pinned to the pine by the road bank, whence Eugenia had fallen two days before!

Eagerly and anxiously as Edmund Bray worked with his companions, it was with more conflicting feelings. There was a certain sense of desecration in their act. How her proud lip would have curled had she seen him — he who but a few hours before would have searched the whole slope for the treasure of a ribbon, a handkerchief, or a bow from her dress — now delving and picking the hillside for that fortune her accident had so mysteriously disclosed. Mysteriously he believed, for he had not fully accepted Parkhurst's story. That gentle misogynist had never been an active prospector; an inclination to theorize without practice and to combat his partners' experience were all against his alleged process of discovery, although the gold was actually there; and his conduct that afternoon was certainly peculiar. He did but little of the real work; but wandered from man to man, with suggestions, advice, and exhortations, and the air of a superior patron. This might have been characteristic, but mingled with it was a certain nervous anxiety and watchfulness. He was continually scanning the stage road and the trail, staring eagerly at any wayfarer in the distance, and at times falling into fits of strange abstraction. At other times he would draw near

to one of his fellow partners, as if for confidential disclosure, and then check himself and wander aimlessly away. And it was not until evening came that the mystery was solved.

The prospecting pans had been duly washed and examined, the slope above and below had been fully explored and tested, with a result and promise that outran their most sanguine hopes. There was no mistaking the fact that they had made a "big" strike. That singular gravity and reticence, so often observed in miners at these crises, had come over them as they sat that night for the last time around their old camp-fire on the Eureka ledge, when Parkhurst turned impulsively to Bray. "Roll over here," he said in a whisper. "I want to tell ye suthin'!"

Bray "rolled" beyond the squatting circle, and the two men gradually edged themselves out of hearing of the others. In the silent abstraction that prevailed nobody noticed them.

"It 's got suthin' to do with this discovery," said Parkhurst, in a low, mysterious tone, "but as far as the gold goes, and our equal rights to it as partners, it don't affect them. If I," he continued in a slightly patronizing, paternal tone, "choose to make you and the other boys sharers in what seems to be a special Providence to *me*, I reckon we won't quarrel on it. It 's a mighty curious, singular thing. It 's one of those things ye read about in books and don't take any stock in! But we 've got the gold — and I 've got the black and white to prove it — even if it ain't exactly human."

His voice sank so low, his manner was so impressive, that despite his known exaggeration, Bray felt a slight thrill of superstition. Meantime Parkhurst wiped his brow, took a folded slip of paper and a sprig of laurel from his pocket, and drew a long breath.

"When I got to the spring this afternoon," he went on,

in a nervous, tremulous, and scarcely audible voice, "I saw this bit o' paper, folded note-wise, lyin' on the ledge before it. On top of it was this sprig of laurel, to catch the eye. I ain't the man to pry into other folks' secrets, or read what ain't mine. But on the back o' this note was written 'To Jack!' It 's a common enough name, but it 's a singular thing, ef you 'll recollect, thar ain't *another* Jack in this company, not on the whole ridge betwixt this and the summit, except *myself!* So I opened it, and this is what it read!" He held the paper sideways toward the leaping light of the still near camp-fire, and read slowly, with the emphasis of having read it many times before.

"'I want you to believe that *I*, at least, respect and honor your honest, manly calling, and when you strike it rich, as you surely will, I hope you will sometimes think of Jill.'"

In the thrill of joy, hope, and fear that came over Bray, he could see that Parkhurst had not only failed to detect his secret, but had not even connected the two names with their obvious suggestion. "But do you know anybody named Jill?" he asked breathlessly.

"It 's no *name*," said Parkhurst in a sombre voice, "it 's a *thing!*"

"A thing?" repeated Bray, bewildered.

"Yes, a measure — you know — two fingers of whiskey."

"Oh, a 'gill,'" said Bray.

"That 's what I said, young man," returned Parkhurst gravely.

Bray choked back a hysterical laugh; spelling was notoriously not one of Parkhurst's strong points. "But what has a 'gill' got to do with it?" he asked quickly.

"It 's one of them Sphinx things, don't you see? A sort of riddle or rebus, you know. You 've got to study it out, as them old chaps did. But I fetched it. What comes after 'gills,' eh?"

"Pints, I suppose," said Bray.

"And after pints?"

"Quarts."

"*Quartz*, and there you are. So I looked about me for quartz, and sure enough struck it the first pop."

Bray cast a quick look at Parkhurst's grave face. The man was evidently impressed and sincere. "Have you told this to any one?" he asked quickly.

"No."

"Then *don't!* or you 'll spoil the charm, and bring us ill luck! That 's the rule, you know. I really don't know that you ought to have told me," added the artful Bray, dissembling his intense joy at this proof of Eugenia's remembrance.

"But," said Parkhurst blankly, "you see, old man, you 'd been the last man at the spring, and I kinder thought" —

"Don't think," said Bray promptly, "and above all, don't talk; not a word to the boys of this. Stay! Give me the paper and the sprig. I 've got to go to San Francisco next week, and I 'll take care of it and think it out!" He knew that Parkhurst might be tempted to talk, but without the paper his story would be treated lightly. Parkhurst handed him the paper, and the two men returned to the camp-fire.

That night Bray slept but little. The superstition of the lover is no less keen than that of the gambler, and Bray, while laughing at Parkhurst's extravagant fancy, I am afraid was equally inclined to believe that their good fortune came through Eugenia's influence. At least he should tell her so, and her precious note became now an invitation as well as an excuse for seeking her. The only fear that possessed him was that she might have expected some acknowledgment of her note before she left that afternoon; the only thing he could not understand was how she

had managed to convey the note to the spring, for she could not have taken it herself. But this would doubtless be explained by her in San Francisco, whither he intended to seek her. His affairs, the purchasing of machinery for their new claim, would no doubt give him easy access to her father.

But it was one thing to imagine this while procuring a new and fashionable outfit in San Francisco, and quite another to stand before the "palatial" residence of the Neworths on Rincon Hill, with the consciousness of no other introduction than the memory of the Neworths' discourtesy on the mountain, and, even in his fine feathers, Bray hesitated. At this moment a carriage rolled up to the door, and Eugenia, an adorable vision of laces and silks, alighted.

Forgetting everything else, he advanced toward her with outstretched hand. He saw her start, a faint color come into her face; he knew he was recognized; but she stiffened quickly again, the color vanished, her beautiful gray eyes rested coldly on him for a moment, and then, with the faintest inclination of her proud head, she swept by him and entered the house.

But Bray, though shocked, was not daunted, and perhaps his own pride was awakened. He ran to his hotel, summoned a messenger, inclosed her note in an envelope, and added these lines: —

DEAR MISS NEWORTH, — I only wanted to thank you an hour ago, as I should like to have done before, for the kind note which I inclose, but which you have made me feel I have no right to treasure any longer, and to tell you that your most generous wish and prophecy has been more than fulfilled.

Yours, very gratefully,

EDMUND BRAY.

Within the hour the messenger returned with the still briefer reply: —

"Miss Neworth has been fully aware of that preoccupation with his good fortune which prevented Mr. Bray from an earlier acknowledgment of her foolish note."

Cold as this response was, Bray's heart leaped. She *had* lingered on the summit, and *had* expected a reply. He seized his hat, and, jumping into the first cab at the hotel door, drove rapidly back to the house. He had but one idea, to see her at any cost, but one concern, to avoid a meeting with her father first, or a denial at her very door.

He dismissed the cab at the street corner and began to reconnoitre the house. It had a large garden in the rear, reclaimed from the adjacent "scrub oak" infested sand hill, and protected by a high wall. If he could scale that wall, he could command the premises. It was a bright morning; she might be tempted into the garden. A taller scrub oak grew near the wall; to the mountain-bred Bray it was an easy matter to swing himself from it to the wall, and he did. But his momentum was so great that he touched the wall only to be obliged to leap down into the garden to save himself from falling there. He heard a little cry, felt his feet strike some tin utensil, and rolled on the ground beside Eugenia and her overturned watering-pot.

They both struggled to their feet with an astonishment that turned to laughter in their eyes and the same thought in the minds of each.

"But we are not on the mountains now, Mr. Bray," said Eugenia, taking her handkerchief at last from her sobering face and straightening eyebrows.

"But we are quits," said Bray. "And you now know my real name. I only came here to tell you why I could not answer your letter the same day. I never got it — I mean," he added hurriedly, "another man got it first."

She threw up her head, and her face grew pale. "*Another* man got it," she repeated, "and *you* let another man" —

"No, no," interrupted Bray imploringly. "You don't understand. One of my partners went to the spring that afternoon, and found it; but he neither knows who sent it, nor for whom it was intended." He hastily recounted Parkhurst's story, his mysterious belief, and his interpretation of the note. The color came back to her face and the smile to her lips and eyes. "I had gone twice to the spring after I saw you, but I could n't bear its deserted look without you," he added boldly. Here, seeing her face grew grave again, he added, "But how did you get the letter to the spring? and how did you know that it was found that day?"

It was her turn to look embarrassed and entreating, but the combination was charming in her proud face. "I got the little schoolboy at the summit," she said, with girlish hesitation, "to take the note. He knew the spring, but he did n't know *you*. I told him — it was very foolish, I know — to wait until you came for water, to be certain that you got the note, to wait until you came up, for I thought you might question him, or give him some word." Her face was quite rosy now. "But," she added, and her lip took a divine pout, "he said he waited *two hours;* that you never took the *least concern* of the letter or him, but went around the mountain side, peering and picking in every hole and corner of it, and then he got tired and ran away. Of course I understand it now, it was n't *you;* but oh, please; I beg you, Mr. Bray, don't!"

Bray released the little hand which he had impulsively caught, and which had allowed itself to be detained for a blissful moment.

"And now, don't you think, Mr. Bray," she added demurely, "that you had better let me fill my pail again

while you go round to the front door and call upon me properly?"

"But your father" —

"My father, as a well-known investor, regrets exceedingly that he did not make your acquaintance more thoroughly in his late brief interview. He is, as your foreman knows, exceedingly interested in the mines on Eureka ledge. He will be glad if you will call." She led him to a little door in the wall, which she unbolted. "And now 'Jill' must say good-by to 'Jack,' for she must make herself ready to receive a Mr. Bray who is expected."

And when Bray a little later called at the front door, he was respectfully announced. He called another day, and many days after. He came frequently to San Francisco, and one day did not return to his old partners. He had entered into a new partnership with one who he declared "had made the first strike on Eureka mountain."

UNDER THE EAVES

THE assistant editor of the San Francisco "Daily Informer" was going home. So much of his time was spent in the office of the "Informer" that no one ever cared to know where he passed those six hours of sleep which presumably suggested a domicile. His business appointments outside the office were generally kept at the restaurant where he breakfasted and dined, or of evenings in the lobbies of theatres or the anterooms of public meetings. Yet he had a home and an interval of seclusion of which he was jealously mindful, and it was to this he was going to-night at his usual hour.

His room was in a new building on one of the larger and busier thoroughfares. The lower floor was occupied by a bank, but as it was closed before he came home, and not yet opened when he left, it did not disturb his domestic sensibilities. The same may be said of the next floor, which was devoted to stockbrokers' and companies' offices, and was equally tomb-like and silent when he passed; the floor above that was a desert of empty rooms, which echoed to his footsteps night and morning, with here and there an oasis in the green sign of a mining secretary's office, with, however, the desolating announcement that it would only be "open for transfers from two to four on Saturdays." The top floor had been frankly abandoned in an unfinished state by the builder, whose ambition had "o'erleaped itself" in that sanguine era of the city's growth. There was a smell of plaster and the first coat of paint about it still, but the whole front of the building was occupied by a long room

with odd "bull's-eye" windows looking out through the heavy ornamentations of the cornice over the adjacent roofs.

It had been originally intended for a club-room, but after the ill fortune which attended the letting of the floor below, and possibly because the earthquake-fearing San Franciscans had their doubts of successful hilarity at the top of so tall a building, it remained unfinished, with the two smaller rooms at its side. Its incomplete and lonely grandeur had once struck the editor during a visit of inspection, and the landlord, whom he knew, had offered to make it habitable for him at a nominal rent. It had a lavatory with a marble basin and a tap of cold water. The offer was a novel one, but he accepted it, and fitted up the apartment with some cheap second-hand furniture, quite inconsistent with the carved mantels and decorations, and made a fair sitting-room and bedroom of it. Here, on a Sunday, when its stillness was intensified, and even a passing footstep on the pavement fifty feet below was quite startling, he would sit and work by one of the quaint open windows. In the rainy season, through the filmed panes he sometimes caught a glimpse of the distant, white-capped bay, but never of the street below him.

The lights were out, but, groping his way up to the first landing, he took from a cupboarded niche in the wall his candlestick and matches and continued the ascent to his room. The humble candlelight flickered on the ostentatious gold letters displayed on the ground-glass doors of opulent companies which he knew were famous, and rooms where millionaires met in secret conclave, but the contrast awakened only his sense of humor. Yet he was always relieved after he had reached his own floor. Possibly its incompleteness and inchoate condition made it seem less lonely than the desolation of the finished and furnished rooms below, and it was only this recollection of past human occupancy that was depressing.

He opened his door, lit the solitary gas jet that only half illuminated the long room, and, it being already past midnight, began to undress himself. This process presently brought him to that corner of his room where his bed stood, when he suddenly stopped, and his sleepy yawn changed to a gape of surprise. For, lying in the bed, its head upon the pillow, and its rigid arms accurately stretched down over the turned-back sheet, was a child's doll! It was a small doll — a banged and battered doll, that had seen service, but it had evidently been "tucked in" with maternal tenderness, and lay there with its staring eyes turned to the ceiling, the very genius of insomnia!

His first start of surprise was followed by a natural resentment of what might have been an impertinent intrusion on his privacy by some practical-joking adult, for he knew there was no child in the house.

His room was kept in order by the wife of the night watchman employed by the bank, and no one else had a right of access to it. But the woman might have brought a child there and not noticed its disposal of its plaything. He smiled. It might have been worse ! It might have been a real baby!

The idea tickled him with a promise of future "copy" — of a story with farcical complications, or even a dramatic ending, in which the baby, adopted by him, should turn out to be somebody's stolen offspring. He lifted the little image that had suggested these fancies, carefully laid it on his table, went to bed, and presently forgot it all in slumber.

In the morning his good-humor and interest in it revived to the extent of writing on a slip of paper, "Good-morning! Thank you — I 've slept very well," putting the slip in the doll's jointed arms, and leaving it in a sitting posture outside his door when he left his room. When he returned late at night it was gone.

But it so chanced that, a few days later, owing to press

of work on the "Informer," he was obliged to forego his usual Sunday holiday out of town, and that morning found him, while the bells were ringing for church, in his room with a pile of manuscript and proof before him. For these were troublous days in San Francisco; the great Vigilance Committee of '56 was in session, and the offices of the daily papers were thronged with eager seekers of news. Such affairs, indeed, were not in the functions of the assistant editor, nor exactly to his taste; he was neither a partisan of the so-called Law and Order Party, nor yet an enthusiastic admirer of the citizen Revolutionists known as the Vigilance Committee, both extremes being incompatible with his habits of thought. Consequently he was not displeased at this opportunity of doing his work away from the office and the "heady talk" of controversy.

He worked on until the bells ceased and a more than Sabbath stillness fell upon the streets. So quiet was it that once or twice the conversation of passing pedestrians floated up and into his window, as of voices at his elbow.

Presently he heard the sound of a child's voice singing in subdued tone, as if fearful of being overheard. This time he laid aside his pen — it certainly was no delusion! The sound did not come from the open window, but from some space on a level with his room. Yet there was no contiguous building as high.

He rose and tried to open his door softly, but it creaked, and the singing instantly ceased. There was nothing before him but the bare, empty hall, with its lathed and plastered partitions, and the two smaller rooms, unfinished like his own, on either side of him. Their doors were shut; the one at his right hand was locked, the other yielded to his touch.

For the first moment he saw only the bare walls of the apparently empty room. But a second glance showed him two children — a boy of seven and a girl of five — sitting

on the floor, which was further littered by a mattress, pillow, and blanket. There was a cheap tray on one of the trunks containing two soiled plates and cups and fragments of a meal. But there was neither a chair nor table nor any other article of furniture in the room. Yet he was struck by the fact that, in spite of this poverty of surrounding, the children were decently dressed, and the few scattered pieces of luggage in quality bespoke a superior condition.

The children met his astonished stare with an equal wonder and, he fancied, some little fright. The boy's lips trembled a little as he said apologetically, —

"I told Jinny not to sing. But she did n't make *much* noise."

"Mamma said I could play with my dolly. But I fordot and singed," said the little girl penitently.

"Where 's your mamma?" asked the young man. The fancy of their being near relatives of the night watchman had vanished at the sound of their voices.

"Dorn out," said the girl.

"When did she go out?"

"Last night."

"Were you all alone here last night?"

"Yes!"

Perhaps they saw the look of indignation and pity in the editor's face, for the boy said quickly, —

"She don't go out *every* night; last night she went to" —

He stopped suddenly, and both children looked at each other with a half laugh and half cry, and then repeated in hopeless unison, "She 's dorn out."

"When is she coming back again?"

"To-night. But we won't make any more noise."

"Who brings you your food?" continued the editor, looking at the tray.

"Woberts."

Evidently Roberts, the night watchman! The editor felt relieved; here was a clue to some explanation. He instantly sat down on the floor between them.

"So that was the dolly that slept in my bed," he said gayly, taking it up.

God gives helplessness a wonderful intuition of its friends. The children looked up at the face of their grown-up companion, giggled, and then burst into a shrill fit of laughter. He felt that it was the first one they had really indulged in for many days. Nevertheless he said, "Hush!" confidentially; why he scarcely knew, except to intimate to them that he had taken in their situation thoroughly. "Make no noise," he added softly, "and come into my big room."

They hung back, however, with frightened yet longing eyes. "Mamma said we mussent do out of this room," said the girl.

"Not *alone*," responded the editor quickly, "but with *me*, you know; that 's different."

The logic sufficed them, poor as it was. Their hands slid quite naturally into his. But at the door he stopped, and motioning to the locked door of the other room, asked: —

"And is that mamma's room, too?"

Their little hands slipped from his and they were silent. Presently the boy, as if acted upon by some occult influence of the girl, said in a half whisper, "Yes."

The editor did not question further, but led them into his room. Here they lost the slight restraint they had shown, and began, child fashion, to become questioners themselves.

In a few moments they were in possession of his name, his business, the kind of restaurant he frequented, where he went when he left his room all day, the meaning of those funny slips of paper, and the written manuscripts,

and why he was so quiet. But any attempt of his to retaliate by counter questions was met by a sudden reserve so unchildlike and painful to him — as it was evidently to themselves — that he desisted, wisely postponing his inquiries until he could meet Roberts.

He was glad when they fell to playing games with each other quite naturally, yet not entirely forgetting his propinquity, as their occasional furtive glances at his movements showed him. He, too, became presently absorbed in his work, until it was finished and it was time for him to take it to the office of the "Informer." The wild idea seized him of also taking the children afterwards for a holiday to the Mission Dolores, but he prudently remembered that even this negligent mother of theirs might have some rights over her offspring that he was bound to respect.

He took leave of them gayly, suggesting that the doll be replaced in his bed while he was away, and even assisted in "tucking it up." But during the afternoon the recollection of these lonely playfellows in the deserted house obtruded itself upon his work and the talk of his companions. Sunday night was his busiest night, and he could not, therefore, hope to get away in time to assure himself of their mother's return.

It was nearly two in the morning when he returned to his room. He paused for a moment on the threshold to listen for any sound from the adjoining room. But all was hushed.

His intention of speaking to the night watchman was, however, anticipated the next morning by that guardian himself. A tap upon his door while he was dressing caused him to open it somewhat hurriedly in the hope of finding one of the children there, but he met only the embarrassed face of Roberts. Inviting him into the room, the editor continued dressing. Carefully closing the door behind him, the man began, with evident hesitation, —

"I oughter hev told ye suthin' afore, Mr. Breeze; but I kalkilated, so to speak, that you would n't be bothered one way or another, and so ye had n't any call to know that there was folks here" —

"Oh, I see," interrupted Breeze cheerfully; "you 're speaking of the family next door — the landlord's new tenants."

"They ain't exactly *that*," said Roberts, still with embarrassment. "The fact is — ye see — the thing points *this* way; they ain't no right to be here, and it 's as much as my place is worth if it leaks out that they are."

Mr. Breeze suspended his collar-buttoning, and stared at Roberts.

"You see, sir, they 're mighty poor, and they 've nowhere else to go — and I reckoned to take 'em in here for a spell and say nothing about it."

"But the landlord would n't object, surely? I 'll speak to him myself," said Breeze impulsively.

"Oh, no; don't!" said Roberts in alarm; "he would n't like it. You see, Mr. Breeze, it 's just this way: the mother, she 's a born lady, and did my old woman a good turn in old times when the family was rich; but now she 's obliged — just to support herself, you know — to take up with what she gets, and she acts in the bally in the theatre, you see, and hez to come in late o' nights. In them cheap boarding-houses, you know, the folks looks down upon her for that, and won't hev her, and in the cheap hotels the men are — you know — a darned sight wuss, and that 's how I took her and her kids in here, where no one knows 'em."

"I see," nodded the editor sympathetically; "and very good it was of you, my man."

Roberts looked still more confused, and stammered with a forced laugh, "And — so — I 'm just keeping her on here, unbeknownst, until her husband gets" — He stopped suddenly.

"So she has a husband living, then?" said Breeze in surprise.

"In the mines, yes — in the mines!" repeated Roberts with a monotonous deliberation quite distinct from his previous hesitation, "and she 's only waitin' until he gets money enough — to — to take her away." He stopped and breathed hard.

"But could n't you — could n't *we* — get her some more furniture? There 's nothing in that room, you know, not a chair or table; and unless the other room is better furnished" —

"Eh? Oh, yes!" said Roberts quickly, yet still with a certain embarrassment; "of course *that* 's better furnished, and she 's quite satisfied, and so are the kids, with anything. And now, Mr. Breeze, I reckon you 'll say nothin' o' this, and you 'll never go back on me?"

"My dear Mr. Roberts," said the editor gravely, "from this moment I am not only blind, but deaf to the fact that *anybody* occupies this floor but myself."

"I knew you was white all through, Mr. Breeze," said the night watchman, grasping the young man's hand with a grip of iron, "and I telled my wife so. I sez, 'Jest you let me tell him *everythin'*,' but she" — He stopped again and became confused.

"And she was quite right, I dare say," said Breeze, with a laugh; "and I do not want to know anything. And that poor woman must never know that I ever knew anything, either. But you may tell your wife that when the mother is away she can bring the little ones in here whenever she likes."

"Thank ye — thank ye, sir! — and I 'll just run down and tell the old woman now, and won't intrude upon your dressin' any longer."

He grasped Breeze's hand again, went out and closed the door behind him. It might have been the editor's fancy,

but he thought there was a certain interval of silence outside the door before the night watchman's heavy tread was heard along the hall again.

For several evenings after this Mr. Breeze paid some attention to the ballet in his usual round of the theatres. Although he had never seen his fair neighbor, he had a vague idea that he might recognize her through some likeness to her children. But in vain. In the opulent charms of certain nymphs, and in the angular austerities of others, he failed equally to discern any of those refinements which might have distinguished the "born lady" of Roberts's story, or which he himself had seen in her children.

These he did not meet again during the week, as his duties kept him late at the office; but from certain signs in his room he knew that Mrs. Roberts had availed herself of his invitation to bring them in with her, and he regularly found "Jinny's" doll tucked up in his bed at night, and he as regularly disposed of it outside his door in the morning, with a few sweets, like an offering, tucked under its rigid arms.

But another circumstance touched him more delicately; his room was arranged with greater care than before, and with an occasional exhibition of taste that certainly had not distinguished Mrs. Roberts's previous ministrations. One evening on his return he found a small bouquet of inexpensive flowers in a glass on his writing-table. He loved flowers too well not to detect that they were quite fresh, and could have been put there only an hour or two before he arrived.

The next evening was Saturday, and as he usually left the office earlier on that day, it occurred to him, as he walked home, that it was about the time his fair neighbor would be leaving the theatre, and that it was possible he might meet her.

At the front door, however, he found Roberts, who returned his greeting with a certain awkwardness which

struck him as singular. When he reached the niche on the landing he found his candle was gone, but he proceeded on, groping his way up the stairs, with an odd conviction that both these incidents pointed to the fact that the woman had just returned or was expected.

He had also a strange feeling — which may have been owing to the darkness — that some one was hidden on the landing or on the stairs where he would pass. This was further accented by a faint odor of patchouli, as, with his hand on the rail, he turned the corner of the third landing, and he was convinced that if he had put out his other hand it would have come in contact with his mysterious neighbor. But a certain instinct of respect for her secret, which she was even now guarding in the darkness, withheld him, and he passed on quickly to his own floor.

Here it was lighter; the moon shot a beam of silver across the passage from an unshuttered window as he passed. He reached his room door, entered, but instead of lighting the gas and shutting the door, stood with it half open, listening in the darkness.

His suspicions were verified; there was a slight rustling noise, and a figure which had evidently followed him appeared at the end of the passage. It was that of a woman habited in a grayish dress and cloak of the same color; but as she passed across the band of moonlight he had a distinct view of her anxious, worried face. It was a face no longer young; it was worn with illness, but still replete with a delicacy and faded beauty so inconsistent with her avowed profession that he felt a sudden pang of pain and doubt. The next moment she had vanished in her room, leaving the same faint perfume behind her. He closed his door softly, lit the gas, and sat down in a state of perplexity. That swift glimpse of her face and figure had made her story improbable to the point of absurdity, or possibly to the extreme of pathos!

It seemed incredible that a woman of that quality should be forced to accept a vocation at once so low, so distasteful, and so unremunerative. With her evident antecedents, had she no friends but this common Western night watchman of a bank? Had Roberts deceived him? Was his whole story a fabrication, and was there some complicity between the two? What was it? He knit his brows.

Mr. Breeze had that overpowering knowledge of the world which comes only with the experience of twenty-five, and to this he superadded the active imagination of a newspaper man. A plot to rob the bank? These mysterious absences, that luggage which he doubted not was empty and intended for spoil! But why encumber herself with the two children? Here his common sense and instinct of the ludicrous returned and he smiled.

But he could not believe in the ballet dancer! He wondered, indeed, how any manager could have accepted the grim satire of that pale, worried face among the fairies, that sad refinement amid their vacant smiles and rouged cheeks. And then, growing sad again, he comforted himself with the reflection that at least the children were not alone that night, and so went to sleep.

For some days he had no further meeting with his neighbors. The disturbed state of the city — for the Vigilance Committee were still in session — obliged the daily press to issue "extras," and his work at the office increased.

It was not until Sunday again that he was able to be at home. Needless to say that his solitary little companions were duly installed there, while he sat at work with his proofs on the table before him.

The stillness of the empty house was broken only by the habitually subdued voices of the children at their play, when suddenly the harsh stroke of a distant bell came through the open window. But it was no Sabbath bell, and Mr. Breeze knew it. It was the tocsin of the Vigilance

Committee, summoning the members to assemble at their quarters for a capture, a trial, or an execution of some wrongdoer. To him it was equally a summons to the office — to distasteful news and excitement.

He threw his proofs aside in disgust, laid down his pen, seized his hat, and paused a moment to look round for his playmates. But they were gone! He went into the hall, looked into the open door of their room, but they were not there. He tried the door of the second room, but it was locked.

Satisfied that they had stolen downstairs in their eagerness to know what the bell meant, he hurried down also, met Roberts in the passage, — a singularly unusual circumstance at that hour, — called to him to look after the runaways, and hurried to his office.

Here he found the staff collected, excitedly discussing the news. One of the Vigilance Committee prisoners, a notorious bully and ruffian, detained as a criminal and a witness, had committed suicide in his cell. Fortunately this was all reportorial work, and the services of Mr. Breeze were not required. He hurried back, relieved, to his room.

When he reached his landing, breathlessly, he heard the same quick rustle he had heard that memorable evening, and was quite satisfied that he saw a figure glide swiftly out of the open door of his room. It was no doubt his neighbor, who had been seeking her children, and as he heard their voices as he passed, his uneasiness and suspicions were removed.

He sat down again to his scattered papers and proofs, finished his work, and took it to the office on his way to dinner. He returned early, in the hope that he might meet his neighbor again, and had quite settled his mind that he was justified in offering a civil "Good-evening" to her, in spite of his previous respectful ignoring of her presence. She must certainly have become aware by this time

of his attention to her children and consideration for herself, and could not mistake his motives. But he was disappointed, although he came up softly; he found the floor in darkness and silence on his return, and he had to be content with lighting his gas and settling down to work again.

A near church clock had struck ten when he was startled by the sound of an unfamiliar and uncertain step in the hall, followed by a tap at his door. Breeze jumped to his feet, and was astonished to find Dick, the "printer's devil," standing on the threshold with a roll of proofs in his hand.

"How did you get here?" he asked testily.

"They told me at the restaurant they reckoned you lived yere, and the night watchman at the door headed me straight up. When he knew whar I kem from he wanted to know what the news was, but I told him he 'd better buy an extra and see."

"Well, what did you come for?" said the editor impatiently.

"The foreman said it was important, and he wanted to know afore he went to press ef this yer correction was *yours?*"

He went to the table, unrolled the proofs, and, taking out the slip, pointed to a marked paragraph. "The foreman says the reporter who brought the news allows he got it straight first-hand! But ef you 've corrected it, he reckons you know best."

Breeze saw at a glance that the paragraph alluded to was not of his own writing, but one of several news items furnished by reporters. These had been "set up" in the same "galley," and consequently appeared in the same proof-slip. He was about to say curtly that neither the matter nor the correction was his, when something odd in the correction of the item struck him. It read as follows: —

"It appears that the notorious 'Jim Bodine,' who is in hiding and badly wanted by the Vigilance Committee, has been tempted lately into a renewal of his old recklessness. He was seen in Sacramento Street the other night by two separate witnesses, one of whom followed him, but he escaped in some friendly doorway."

The words "in Sacramento Street" were stricken out and replaced by the correction "on the Saucelito shore," and the words "friendly doorway" were changed to "friendly dinghy."

The correction was not his, nor the handwriting, which was further disguised by being an imitation of print. A strange idea seized him.

"Has any one seen these proofs since I left them at the office?"

"No, only the foreman, sir."

He remembered that he had left the proofs lying openly on his table when he was called to the office at the stroke of the alarm bell; he remembered the figure he saw gliding from his room on his return. She had been there alone with the proofs; she only could have tampered with them.

The evident object of the correction was to direct the public attention from Sacramento Street to Saucelito, as the probable whereabouts of this "Jimmy Bodine." The street below was Sacramento Street, the "friendly doorway" might have been their own.

That she had some knowledge of this Bodine was not more improbable than the ballet story. Her strange absences, the mystery surrounding her, all seemed to testify that she had some connection — perhaps only an innocent one — with these desperate people whom the Vigilance Committee were hunting down. Her attempt to save the man was, after all, no more illegal than their attempt to capture him. True, she might have trusted him, Breeze, without this tampering with his papers; yet perhaps she

thought he was certain to discover it — and it was only a silent appeal to his mercy. The corrections were ingenious and natural — it was the act of an intelligent, quick-witted woman.

Mr. Breeze was prompt in acting upon his intuition, whether right or wrong. He took up his pen, wrote on the margin of the proof, "Print as corrected," said to the boy carelessly, "The corrections are all right," and dismissed him quickly.

The corrected paragraph which appeared in the "Informer" the next morning seemed to attract little public attention, the greater excitement being the suicide of the imprisoned bully and the effect it might have upon the prosecution of other suspected parties, against whom the dead man had been expected to bear witness.

Mr. Breeze was unable to obtain any information regarding the desperado Bodine's associates and relations; his correction of the paragraph had made the other members of the staff believe he had secret and superior information regarding the fugitive, and he thus was estopped from asking questions. But he felt himself justified now in demanding fuller information from Roberts at the earliest opportunity.

For this purpose he came home earlier that night, hoping to find the night watchman still on his first beat in the lower halls. But he was disappointed. He was amazed, however, on reaching his own landing, to find the passage piled with new luggage, some of that ruder type of rolled blanket and knapsack known as a "miner's kit." He was still more surprised to hear men's voices and the sound of laughter proceeding from the room that was always locked. A sudden sense of uneasiness and disgust, he knew not why, came over him.

He passed quickly into his room, shut the door sharply, and lit the gas. But he presently heard the door of the

locked room open, a man's voice, slightly elevated by liquor and opposition, saying, "I know what 's due from one gen-'leman to 'nother" — a querulous, objecting voice saying, "Hole on! not now," and a fainter feminine protest, all of which were followed by a rap on his door.

Breeze opened it to two strangers, one of whom lurched forward unsteadily with outstretched hand. He had a handsome face and figure, and a certain consciousness of it even in the *abandon* of liquor; he had an aggressive treacherousness of eye which his potations had not subdued. He grasped Breeze's hand tightly, but dropped it the next moment perfunctorily as he glanced round the room.

"I told them I was bound to come in," he said, without looking at Breeze, "and say 'Howdy!' to the man that 's been a pal to my women folks and the kids — and acted white all through! I said to Mame, 'I reckon *he* knows who *I* am, and that I kin be high-toned to them that 's high-toned; kin return shake for shake and shot for shot!' Aye! that 's me! So I was bound to come in like a gen-'leman, sir, and here I am!"

He threw himself in an unproffered chair and stared at Breeze.

"I 'm afraid," said Breeze dryly, "that, nevertheless, I never knew who you were, and that even now I am ignorant whom I am addressing."

"That 's just it," said the second man, with a querulous protest, which did not, however, conceal his admiring vassalage to his friend; "that 's what I 'm allus telling Jim. 'Jim,' I says, 'how is folks to know you 're the man that shot Kernel Baxter, and dropped three o' them Mariposa Vigilants? They did n't see you do it! They just look at your fancy style and them mustaches of yours, and allow ye might be death on the girls, but they don't know ye! An' this man yere — he 's a scribe in them papers — writes what the boss editor tells him, and lives up yere on the

roof, 'longside yer wife and the children — what 's he knowin' about *you?*' Jim 's all right enough," he continued, in easy confidence to Breeze, "but he 's too fresh 'bout himself."

Mr. James Bodine accepted this tribute and criticism of his henchman with a complacent laugh, which was not, however, without a certain contempt for the speaker and the man spoken to. His bold, selfish eyes wandered round the room as if in search of some other amusement than his companions offered.

"I reckon this is the room which that hound of a landlord, Rakes, allowed he 'd fix up for our poker club — the club that Dan Simmons and me got up, with a few other sports. It was to be a slap-up affair, right under the roof, where there was no chance of the police raiding us. But the cur weakened when the Vigilants started out to make war on any game a gen'leman might hev that was n't in their gummy-bag, salt pork trade. Well, it 's gettin' a long time between drinks, gen'lemen, ain't it?" He looked round him significantly.

Only the thought of the woman and her children in the next room, and the shame that he believed she was enduring, enabled Breeze to keep his temper or even a show of civility.

"I 'm afraid," he said quietly, "that you 'll find very little here to remind you of the club — not even the whiskey; for I use the room only as a bedroom, and as I am a workingman, and come in late and go out early, I have never found it available for hospitality, even to my intimate friends. I am very glad, however, that the little leisure I have had in it has enabled me to make the floor less lonely for your children."

Mr. Bodine got up with an affected yawn, turned an embarrassed yet darkening eye on Breeze, and lunged unsteadily to the door. "And as I only happened in to do

the reg'lar thing between high-toned gen'lemen, I reckon we kin say 'Quits.'" He gave a coarse laugh, said "So long," nodded, stumbled into the passage, and thence into the other room.

His companion watched him pass out with a relieved yet protecting air, and then, closing the door softly, drew nearer to Breeze, and said in husky confidence, —

"Ye ain't seein' him at his best, mister! He 's been drinkin' too much, and this yer news has upset him."

"What news?" asked Breeze.

"This yer suicide o' Irish Jack!"

"Was he his friend?"

"Friend?" ejaculated the man, horrified at the mere suggestion. "Not much! Why, Irish Jack was the only man that could hev hung Jim! Now he 's dead, in course the Vigilants ain't got no proof ag'in' Jim. Jim wants to face it out now an' stay here, but his wife and me don't see it noways! So we are taking advantage o' the lull ag'in' him to get him off down the coast this very night. That 's why he 's been off his head drinkin'. Ye see, when a man has been for weeks hidin' — part o' the time in that room and part o' the time on the wharf, where them Vigilants has been watchin' every ship that left in order to ketch him, he 's inclined to celebrate his chance o' getting away" —

"Part of the time in that room?" interrupted Breeze quickly.

"Sartin! Don't ye see? He allus kem in as you went out — *sabe!* — and got away before you kem back, his wife all the time just a-hoverin' between the two places, and keepin' watch for him. It was killin' to her, you see, for she was n't brought up to it, whiles Jim did n't keer — had two revolvers and kalkilated to kill a dozen Vigilants afore he dropped. But that 's over now, and when I 've got him safe on that 'plunger' down at the wharf to-night,

and put him aboard the schooner that 's lying off the Heads, he 's all right ag'in."

"And Roberts knew all this and was one of his friends?" asked Breeze.

"Roberts knew it, and Roberts's wife used to be a kind of servant to Jim's wife in the South, when she was a girl, but I don't know ez Roberts is his *friend!*"

"He certainly has shown himself one," said Breeze.

"Ye-e-s," said the stranger meditatively, "ye-e-s." He stopped, opened the door softly, and peeped out, and then closed it again softly. "It 's sing'lar, Mr. Breeze," he went on in a sudden yet embarrassed burst of confidence, "that Jim thar — a man thet can shoot straight, and hez frequent; a man thet knows every skin game goin' — that *thet* man Jim," very slowly, "hez n't really — got — any friends — 'cept me — and his wife."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Breeze dryly.

"Sure! Why, you yourself did n't cotton to him — I could see *thet.*"

Mr. Breeze felt himself redden slightly, and looked curiously at the man. This vulgar parasite, whom he had set down as a worshiper of sham heroes, undoubtedly did not look like an associate of Bodine's, and had a certain seriousness that demanded respect. As he looked closer into his wide, round face, seamed with smallpox, he fancied he saw even in its fatuous imbecility something of that haunting devotion he had seen on the refined features of the wife. He said more gently, —

"But one friend like you would seem to be enough."

"I ain't what I uster be, Mr. Breeze," said the man meditatively, "and mebbe ye don't know who I am. I 'm Abe Shuckster, of Shuckster's Ranch — one of the biggest in Petalumy. I was a rich man until a year ago, when Jim got inter trouble. What with mortgages and interest, payin' up Jim's friends and buying off some ez was set ag'in'

him, thar ain't much left, and when I 've settled that bill for the schooner lying off the Heads there I reckon I 'm about played out. But I 've allus a shanty at Petalumy, and mebbe when things is froze over and Jim gets back — you 'll come and see him — for you ain't seen him at his best."

"I suppose his wife and children go with him?" said Breeze.

"No! He 's ag'in' it, and wants them to come later. But that 's all right, for you see she kin go back to their own house at the Mission, now that the Vigilants are givin' up shadderin' it. So long, Mr. Breeze! We 're startin' afore daylight. Sorry you did n't see Jim in condition."

He grasped Breeze's hand warmly and slipped out of the door softly. For an instant Mr. Breeze felt inclined to follow him into the room and make a kinder adieu to the pair, but the reflection that he might embarrass the wife, who, it would seem, had purposely avoided accompanying her husband when he entered, withheld him. And for the last few minutes he had been doubtful if he had any right to pose as her friend. Beside the devotion of the man who had just left him, his own scant kindness to her children seemed ridiculous.

He went to bed, but tossed uneasily until he fancied he heard stealthy footsteps outside his door and in the passage. Even then he thought of getting up, dressing, and going out to bid farewell to the fugitives. But even while he was thinking of it he fell asleep, and did not wake until the sun was shining in at his windows.

He sprang to his feet, threw on his dressing-gown, and peered into the passage. Everything was silent. He stepped outside — the light streamed into the hall from the open doors and windows of both rooms — the floor was empty; not a trace of the former occupants remained. He was turning back when his eye fell upon the battered

wooden doll set upright against his door-jamb, holding stiffly in its jointed arms a bit of paper folded like a note. Opening it, he found a few lines written in pencil.

God bless you for your kindness to us, and try to forgive me for touching your papers. But I thought that you would detect it, know *why* I did it, and then help us, as you did! Good-by!

MAMIE BODINE.

Mr. Breeze laid down the paper with a slight accession of color, as if its purport had been ironical. How little had he done compared to the devotion of this delicate woman or the sacrifices of that rough friend! How deserted looked this nest under the eaves, which had so long borne its burden of guilt, innocence, shame, and suffering! For many days afterwards he avoided it except at night, and even then he often found himself lying awake to listen to the lost voices of the children.

But one evening, a fortnight later, he came upon Roberts in the hall. "Well," said Breeze, with abrupt directness, "did he get away?"

Roberts started, uttered an oath which it is possible the Recording Angel passed to his credit, and said, "Yes, *he* got away all right!"

"Why, has n't his wife joined him?"

"No. Never, in this world, I reckon; and if anywhere in the next, I don't want to go there!" said Roberts furiously.

"Is he dead?"

"Dead? That kind don't die!"

"What do you mean?"

Roberts's lips writhed, and then, with a strong effort, he said with deliberate distinctness, "I mean — that the hound went off with another woman — that — was — in —

that schooner, and left that fool Shuckster adrift in the plunger."

"And the wife and children?"

"Shuckster sold his shanty at Petaluma to pay their passage to the States. Good-night!"

HOW REUBEN ALLEN "SAW LIFE" IN SAN FRANCISCO

THE junior partner of the firm of Sparlow & Kane, Druggists and Apothecaries, of San Francisco, was gazing meditatively out of the corner of the window of their little shop in Dupont Street. He could see the dimly lit perspective of the narrow thoroughfare fade off into the level sand wastes of Market Street on the one side, and plunge into the half-excavated bulk of Telegraph Hill on the other. He could see the glow and hear the rumble of Montgomery Street — the great central avenue farther down the hill. Above the housetops was spread the warm blanket of sea-fog under which the city was regularly laid to sleep every summer night to the cool lullaby of the Northwest Trades. It was already half past eleven; footsteps on the wooden pavement were getting rarer and more remote; the last cart had rumbled by; the shutters were up along the street; the glare of his own red and blue jars was the only beacon left to guide the wayfarers. Ordinarily he would have been going home at this hour, when his partner, who occupied the surgery and a small bedroom at the rear of the shop, always returned to relieve him. That night, however, a professional visit would detain the "Doctor" until half past twelve. There was still an hour to wait. He felt drowsy; the mysterious incense of the shop, that combined essence of drugs, spice, scented soap, and orris root — which always reminded him of the Arabian Nights — was affecting him. He yawned, and then, turning away, passed behind the counter, took down a jar labeled "Glycyrr.

Glabra," selected a piece of Spanish licorice, and meditatively sucked it. Not receiving from it that diversion and sustenance he apparently was seeking, he also visited, in an equally familiar manner, a jar marked "Jujubes," and returned ruminatingly to his previous position.

If I have not in this incident sufficiently established the youthfulness of the junior partner, I may add briefly that he was just nineteen, that he had early joined the emigration to California, and after one or two previous light-hearted essays at other occupations, for which he was singularly unfitted, he had saved enough to embark on his present venture, still less suited to his temperament. In those adventurous days trades and vocations were not always filled by trained workmen; it was extremely probable that the experienced chemist was already making his success as a gold-miner, with a lawyer and a physician for his partners, and Mr. Kane's inexperienced position was by no means a novel one. A slight knowledge of Latin as a written language, an American schoolboy's acquaintance with chemistry and natural philosophy, were deemed sufficient by his partner, a regular physician, for practical coöperation in the vending of drugs and putting up of prescriptions. He knew the difference between acids and alkalies and the peculiar results which attended their incautious combination. But he was excessively deliberate, painstaking, and cautious. The legend which adorned the desk at the counter, "Physicians' prescriptions carefully prepared," was more than usually true as regarded the adverb. There was no danger of his poisoning anybody through haste or carelessness, but it was possible that an urgent "case" might have succumbed to the disease while he was putting up the remedy. Nor was his caution entirely passive. In those days the "heroic" practice of medicine was in keeping with the abnormal development of the country; there were "record" doses of calomel and quinine, and he had

once or twice incurred the fury of local practitioners by sending back their prescriptions with a modest query.

The far-off clatter of carriage wheels presently arrested his attention; looking down the street, he could see the lights of a hackney carriage advancing towards him. They had already flashed upon the open crossing a block beyond before his vague curiosity changed into an active instinctive presentiment that they were coming to the shop. He withdrew to a more becoming and dignified position behind the counter as the carriage drew up with a jerk before the door.

The driver rolled from his box and opened the carriage door to a woman whom he assisted, between some hysterical exclamations on her part and some equally incoherent explanations of his own, into the shop. Kane saw at a glance that both were under the influence of liquor, and one, the woman, was disheveled and bleeding about the head. Yet she was elegantly dressed and evidently *en fête*, with one or two "tricolor" knots and ribbons mingled with her finery. Her golden hair, matted and darkened with blood, had partly escaped from her French bonnet and hung heavily over her shoulders. The driver, who was supporting her roughly, and with a familiarity that was part of the incongruous spectacle, was the first to speak.

"Madame le Blanc! ye know! Got cut about the head down at the *fête* at South Park! Tried to dance upon the table, and rolled over on some champagne bottles. See? Wants plastering up!"

"Ah brute! Hog! Nozzing of ze kine! Why will you lie? I dance! Ze cowards, fools, traitors zere upset ze table and I fall. I am cut! Ah, my God, how I am cut!"

She stopped suddenly and lapsed heavily against the counter. At which Kane hurried around to support her into the surgery with the one fixed idea in his bewildered mind of getting her out of the shop, and, suggestively, into the domain and under the responsibility of his partner.

The hackman, apparently relieved and washing his hands of any further complicity in the matter, nodded and smiled, and saying, "I reckon I 'll wait outside, pardner," retreated incontinently to his vehicle. To add to Kane's half-ludicrous embarrassment the fair patient herself slightly resisted his support, accused the hackman of "abandoning her," and demanded if Kane knew "zee reason of zees affair," yet she presently lapsed again into the large reclining-chair which he had wheeled forward, with open mouth, half-shut eyes, and a strange *Pierrette* mask of face, combined of the pallor of faintness and chalk, and the rouge of paint and blood. At which Kane's cautiousness again embarrassed him. A little brandy from the bottle labeled "Vini Galli" seemed to be indicated, but his inexperience could not determine if her relaxation was from bloodlessness or the reacting depression of alcohol. In this dilemma he chose a medium course, with aromatic spirits of ammonia, and mixing a diluted quantity in a measuring-glass, poured it between her white lips. A start, a struggle, a cough — a volley of imprecatory French, and the knocking of the glass from his hand followed — but she came to! He quickly sponged her head of the half-coagulated blood, and removed a few fragments of glass from a long laceration of the scalp. The shock of the cold water and the appearance of the ensanguined basin frightened her into a momentary passivity. But when Kane found it necessary to cut her hair in the region of the wound in order to apply the adhesive plaster, she again endeavored to rise and grasp the scissors.

"You 'll bleed to death if you 're not quiet," said the young man with dogged gravity.

Something in his manner impressed her into silence again. He cut whole locks away ruthlessly; he was determined to draw the edges of the wound together with the strip of plaster and stop the bleeding — if he cropped the whole head. His excessive caution for her physical condi-

tion did not extend to her superficial adornment. Her yellow tresses lay on the floor, her neck and shoulders were saturated with water from the sponge which he continually applied, until the heated strips of plaster had closed the wound almost hermetically. She whimpered, tears ran down her cheeks; but so long as it was not blood the young man was satisfied.

In the midst of it he heard the shop door open, and presently the sound of rapping on the counter. Another customer!

Mr. Kane called out, "Wait a moment," and continued his ministrations. After a pause the rapping recommenced. Kane was just securing the last strip of plaster and preserved a preoccupied silence. Then the door flew open abruptly and a figure appeared impatiently on the thresh old. It was that of a miner recently returned from the gold diggings — so recently that he evidently had not had time to change his clothes at his adjacent hotel, and stood there in his high boots, duck trousers, and flannel shirt, over which his coat was slung like a hussar's jacket from his shoulder. Kane would have uttered an indignant protest at the intrusion, had not the intruder himself as quickly recoiled with an astonishment and contrition that was beyond the effect of any reproval. He literally gasped at the spectacle before him. A handsomely dressed woman reclining in a chair; lace and jewelry and ribbons depending from her saturated shoulders; tresses of golden hair filling her lap and lying on the floor; a pail of ruddy water and a sponge at her feet, and a pale young man bending over her head with a spirit lamp and strips of yellow plaster!

"'Scuse me, pard! I was just dropping in; don't you hurry! I kin wait," he stammered, falling back, and then the door closed abruptly behind him.

Kane gathered up the shorn locks, wiped the face and

neck of his patient with a clean towel and his own handkerchief, threw her gorgeous opera cloak over her shoulders, and assisted her to rise. She did so, weakly but obediently; she was evidently stunned and cowed in some mysterious way by his material attitude, perhaps, or her sudden realization of her position; at least the contrast between her aggressive entrance into the shop and her subdued preparation for her departure was so remarkable that it affected even Kane's preoccupation.

"There," he said, slightly relaxing his severe demeanor with an encouraging smile, "I think this will do; we've stopped the bleeding. It will probably smart a little as the plaster sets closer. I can send my partner, Dr. Sparlow, to you in the morning."

She looked at him curiously and with a strange smile. "And zees Doctor Sparrlow — eez he like you, M'sieu?"

"He is older, and very well known," said the young man seriously. "I can safely recommend him."

"Ah," she repeated, with a pensive smile which made Kane think her quite pretty. "Ah — he ez older — your Doctor Sparrlow — but *you* are strong, M'sieu."

"And," said Kane vaguely, "he will tell you what to do."

"Ah," she repeated again softly, with the same smile, "he will tell me what to do if I shall not know myself. Dat ez good."

Kane had already wrapped her shorn locks in a piece of spotless white paper and tied it up with narrow white ribbon in the dainty fashion dear to druggists' clerks. As he handed it to her she felt in her pocket and produced a handful of gold.

"What shall I pay for zees, M'sieu?"

Kane reddened a little — solely because of his slow arithmetical faculties. Adhesive plaster was cheap — he would like to have charged proportionately for the exact amount

he had used; but the division was beyond him! And he lacked the trader's instinct.

"Twenty-five cents, I think," he hazarded briefly.

She started, but smiled again. "Twenty-five cents for all zees — ze medicine, ze strips for ze head, ze hair cut" — she glanced at the paper parcel he had given her — "it is only twenty-five cents?"

"That 's all."

He selected from her outstretched palm, with some difficulty, the exact amount, the smallest coin it held. She again looked at him curiously — half confusedly — and moved slowly into the shop. The miner, who was still there, retreated as before with a gaspingly apologetic gesture — even flattening himself against the window to give her sweeping silk flounces freer passage. As she passed into the street with a "Merci, M'sieu, good a'night," and the hackman started from the vehicle to receive her, the miner drew a long breath, and bringing his fist down upon the counter, ejaculated, —

"B' gosh! She 's a stunner!"

Kane, a good deal relieved at her departure and the success of his ministration, smiled benignly.

The stranger again stared after the retreating carriage, looked around the shop, and even into the deserted surgery, and approached the counter confidentially. "Look yer, pardner. I kem straight from St. Jo, Mizzorri, to Gold Hill — whar I 've got a claim — and I reckon this is the first time I ever struck San Francisker. I ain't up to towny ways nohow, and I allow that mebbe I 'm rather green. So we 'll let that pass! Now look yer!" he added, leaning over the counter with still deeper and even mysterious confidence, "I suppose this yer kind o' thing is the regular go here, eh? nothin' new to *you!* in course no! But to me, pard, it 's just fetchin' me! Lifts me clear outer my boots every time! Why, when I popped into

Merci, M'sieu, good a'night

jest ez you was lookin' arter that high-toned case, and kinder bothered you! It 's like me!"

"I mean it required diluting; you ought to have taken it in water," said Kane.

"I reckon! It *did* sorter h'ist me over to the door for a little fresh air at first! seemed raythor scaldy to the lips. But wot of it that *got thar*," he put his hand gravely to his stomach, "did me pow'ful good."

"What was the matter with you?" asked Kane.

"Well, ye see, pard" (confidentially again), "I reckon it 's suthin' along o' my heart. Times it gets to poundin' away like a quartz stamp, and then it stops suddent like, and kinder leaves *me* out too."

Kane looked at him more attentively. He was a strong, powerfully built man with a complexion that betrayed nothing more serious than the effects of mining cookery. It was evidently a common case of indigestion.

"I don't say it would not have done you some good if properly administered," he replied. "If you like I 'll put up a diluted quantity and directions?"

"That 's me, every time, pardner!" said the stranger with an accent of relief. "And look yer, don't you stop at that! Ye jest put me up some samples like of anythin' you think mout be likely to hit. I 'll go in for a fair show, and then meander in every now and then, betwixt times, to let you know. Ye don't mind my drifting in here, do ye? It 's about ez likely a place ez I struck since I 've left the Sacramento boat, and my hotel, just round the corner. Ye jest sample me a bit o' everythin'; don't mind the expense. I 'll take *your* word for it. The way you — a young fellow — jest stuck to your work in thar, cool and kam as a woodpecker — not minding how high-toned she was — nor the jewelery and spangles she had on — jest got me! I sez to myself, 'Rube,' sez I, 'whatever 's wrong o' *your* insides, you jest stick to that feller to set ye right.'"

The junior partner's face reddened as he turned to his shelves ostensibly for consultation. Conscious of his inexperience, the homely praise of even this ignorant man was not ungrateful. He felt, too, that his treatment of the Frenchwoman, though successful, might not be considered remunerative from a business point of view by his partner. He accordingly acted upon the suggestion of the stranger and put up two or three specifics for dyspepsia. They were received with grateful alacrity and the casual display of considerable gold in the stranger's pocket in the process of payment. He was evidently a successful miner.

After bestowing the bottles carefully about his person, he again leaned confidentially towards Kane. "I reckon of course you know this high-toned lady, being in the way of seein' that kind o' folks. I suppose you won't mind telling me, ez a stranger. But" (he added hastily, with a deprecatory wave of his hand), "perhaps ye would."

Mr. Kane, in fact, had hesitated. He knew vaguely and by report that Madame le Blanc was the proprietress of a famous restaurant, over which she had rooms where private gambling was carried on to a great extent. It was also alleged that she was protected by a famous gambler and a somewhat notorious bully. Mr. Kane's caution suggested that he had no right to expose the reputation of his chance customer. He was silent.

The stranger's face became intensely sympathetic and apologetic. "I see! — not another word, pard! It ain't the square thing to be givin' her away, and I ought n't to hev asked. Well — so long! I reckon I 'll jest drift back to the hotel. I ain't been in San Francisker mor' 'n three hours, and I calkilate, pard, that I 've jest seen about ez square a sample of high-toned life as fellers ez haz been here a year. Well, hastermanyanner — ez the Greasers say. I 'll be droppin' in to-morrow. My name 's Reuben Allen o' Mariposa. I know yours; it 's on the sign, and it ain't Sparlow."

He cast another lingering glance around the shop, as if loath to leave it, and then slowly sauntered out of the door, pausing in the street a moment, in the glare of the red light, before he faded into darkness. Without knowing exactly why, Kane had an instinct that the stranger knew no one in San Francisco, and after leaving the shop was going into utter silence and obscurity.

A few moments later Dr. Sparlow returned to relieve his wearied partner. A pushing, active man, he listened impatiently to Kane's account of his youthful practice with Madame le Blanc, without, however, dwelling much on his methods. "You ought to have charged her more," the elder said decisively. "She 'd have paid it. She only came here because she was ashamed to go to a big shop in Montgomery Street — and she won't come again."

"But she wants you to see her to-morrow," urged Kane, "and I told her you would!"

"You say it was only a superficial cut?" queried the doctor, "and you closed it? Umph! what can she want to see *me* for?" He paid more attention, however, to the case of the stranger, Allen. "When he comes here again, manage to let me see him." Mr. Kane promised, yet for some indefinable reason he went home that night not quite as well satisfied with himself.

He was much more concerned the next morning when, after relieving the doctor for his regular morning visits, he was startled an hour later by the abrupt return of that gentleman. His face was marked by some excitement and anxiety, which nevertheless struggled with that sense of the ludicrous which Californians in those days imported into most situations of perplexity or catastrophe. Putting his hands deeply into his trousers pockets, he confronted his youthful partner behind the counter.

"How much did you charge that Frenchwoman?" he said gravely.

"Twenty-five cents," said Kane timidly.

"Well, I 'd give it back and add two hundred and fifty dollars if she had never entered the shop."

"What 's the matter?"

"Her head will be — and a mass of it, in a day, I reckon! Why, man, you put enough plaster on it to clothe and paper the dome of the Capitol! You drew her scalp together so that she could n't shut her eyes without climbing up the bed-post! You mowed her hair off so that she 'll have to wear a wig for the next two years — and handed it to her in a beau-ti-ful sealed package! They talk of suing me and killing you out of hand."

"She was bleeding a great deal and looked faint," said the junior partner; "I thought I ought to stop that."

"And you did — by thunder! Though it might have been better business for the shop if I 'd found her a crumbling ruin here, than lathed and plastered in this fashion, over there! However," he added, with a laugh, seeing an angry light in his junior partner's eye, "*she* don't seem to mind it — the cursing all comes from *them*. *She* rather likes your style and praises it — that 's what gets me! Did you talk to her much?" he added, looking critically at his partner.

"I only told her to sit still or she 'd bleed to death," said Kane curtly.

"Humph! — she jabbered something about your being 'strong' and knowing just how to handle her. Well, it can't be helped now. I think I came in time for the worst of it and have drawn their fire. Don't do it again. The next time a woman with a cut head and long hair tackles you, fill up her scalp with lint and tannin, and pack her off to some of the big shops and make *them* pick it out." And with a good-humored nod he started off to finish his interrupted visits.

With a vague sense of remorse, and yet a consciousness

of some injustice done him, Mr. Kane resumed his occupation with filters and funnels, and mortars and triturations. He was so gloomily preoccupied that he did not, as usual, glance out of the window, or he would have observed the mining stranger of the previous night before it. It was not until the man's bowed shoulders blocked the light of the doorway that he looked up and recognized him. Kane was in no mood to welcome his appearance. His presence, too, actively recalled the last night's adventure of which he was a witness — albeit a sympathizing one. Kane shrank from the allusions which he felt he would be sure to make. And with his present ill luck, he was by no means sure that his ministrations even to *him* had been any more successful than they had been to the Frenchwoman. But a glance at his good-humored face and kindling eyes removed that suspicion. Nevertheless, he felt somewhat embarrassed and impatient, and perhaps could not entirely conceal it. He forgot that the rudest natures are sometimes the most delicately sensitive to slights, and the stranger had noticed his manner and began apologetically.

"I allowed I 'd just drop in anyway to tell ye that these thar pills you giv' me did me a heap o' good so far — though mebbe it 's only fair to give the others a show too, which I 'm reckoning to do." He paused, and then in a submissive confidence went on: "But first I wanted to hev you excuse me for havin' asked all them questions about that high-toned lady last night, when it warn't none of my business. I am a darned fool."

Mr. Kane instantly saw that it was no use to keep up his attitude of secrecy, or impose upon the ignorant, simple man, and said hurriedly: "Oh, no. The lady is very well known. She is the proprietress of a restaurant down the street — a house open to everybody. Her name is Madame le Blanc; you may have heard of her before? "

To his surprise the man exhibited no diminution of in-

terest nor change of sentiment at this intelligence. "Then," he said slowly, "I reckon I might get to see her again. Ye see, Mr. Kane, I rather took a fancy to her general style and gait — arter seein' her in that fix last night. It was rather like them play pictures on the stage. Ye don't think she 'd make any fuss to seein' a rough old 'forty-niner' like me?"

"Hardly," said Kane, "but there might be some objection from her gentlemen friends," he added, with a smile, — "Jack Lane, a gambler, who keeps a faro bank in her rooms, and Jimmy O'Ryan, a prize-fighter, who is one of her 'chuckers out.'"

His further relation of Madame le Blanc's *entourage* apparently gave the miner no concern. He looked at Kane, nodded, and repeated slowly and appreciatively: "Yes, keeps a gamblin' and faro bank and a prize-fighter — I reckon that might be about her gait and style too. And you say she lives" —

He stopped, for at this moment a man entered the shop quickly, shut the door behind him, and turned the key in the lock. It was done so quickly that Kane instinctively felt that the man had been loitering in the vicinity and had approached from the side street. A single glance at the intruder's face and figure showed him that it was the bully of whom he had just spoken. He had seen that square, brutal face once before, confronting the police in a riot, and had not forgotten it. But to-day, with the flush of liquor on it, it had an impatient awkwardness and confused embarrassment that he could not account for. He did not comprehend that the genuine bully is seldom deliberate of attack, and is obliged — in common with many of the combative lower animals — to lash himself into a previous fury of provocation. This probably saved him, as perhaps some instinctive feeling that he was in no immediate danger kept him cool. He remained standing quietly behind the

counter. Allen glanced around carelessly, looking at the shelves.

The silence of the two men apparently increased the ruffian's rage and embarrassment. Suddenly he leaped into the air with a whoop and clumsily executed a negro double shuffle on the floor, which jarred the glasses — yet was otherwise so singularly ineffective and void of purpose that he stopped in the midst of it and had to content himself with glaring at Kane.

"Well," said Kane quietly, "what does all this mean? What do you want here?"

"What does it mean?" repeated the bully, finding his voice in a high falsetto, designed to imitate Kane's. "It means I 'm going to play merry h——ll with this shop! It means I 'm goin' to clean it out and the blank hair-cuttin' blank that keeps it. What do I want here? Well — what I want I intend to help myself to, and all h——ll can't stop me! And" (working himself to the striking point) "who the blank are you to ask me?" He sprang towards the counter, but at the same moment Allen seemed to slip almost imperceptibly and noiselessly between them, and Kane found himself confronted only by the miner's broad back.

"Hol' yer hosses, stranger," said Allen slowly, as the ruffian suddenly collided with his impassive figure. "I 'm a sick man comin' in yer for medicine. I 've got somethin' wrong with my heart, and goin's on like this yer kinder sets it to thumpin'."

"Blank you and your blank heart!" screamed the bully, turning in a fury of amazement and contempt at this impotent interruption. "Who" — but his voice stopped. Allen's powerful right arm had passed over his head and shoulders like a steel hoop, and pinioned his elbows against his sides. Held rigidly upright, he attempted to kick, but Allen's right leg here advanced, and firmly held his lower

limbs against the counter that shook to his struggles and blasphemous outcries. Allen turned quietly to Kane, and, with a gesture of his unemployed arm, said confidentially: —

"Would ye mind passing me down that ar Romantic Spirits of Ammonyer ye gave me last night?"

Kane caught the idea, and handed him the bottle.

"Thar," said Allen, taking out the stopper and holding the pungent spirit against the bully's dilated nostrils and vociferous mouth, "thar, smell that, and taste it, it will do ye good; it was powerful kammin' to *me* last night."

The ruffian gasped, coughed, choked, but his blaspheming voice died away in a suffocating hiccough.

"Thar," continued Allen, as his now subdued captive relaxed his struggling, "ye 'r' better, and so am I. It 's quieter here now, and ye ain't affectin' my heart so bad. A little fresh air will make us both all right." He turned again to Kane in his former subdued confidential manner.

"Would ye mind openin' that door?"

Kane flew to the door, unlocked it, and held it wide open. The bully again began to struggle, but a second inhalation of the hartshorn quelled him, and enabled his captor to drag him to the door. As they emerged upon the sidewalk, the bully, with a final desperate struggle, freed his arm and grasped his pistol at his hip-pocket, but at the same moment Allen deliberately caught his hand, and with a powerful side throw cast him on the pavement, retaining the weapon in his own hand. "I 've one of my own," he said to the prostrate man, "but I reckon I 'll keep this yer too, until you 're better."

The crowd that had collected quickly, recognizing the notorious and discomfited bully, were not of a class to offer him any sympathy, and he slunk away followed by their jeers. Allen returned quietly to the shop. Kane was profuse in his thanks, and yet oppressed with his simple

friend's fatuous admiration for a woman who could keep such ruffians in her employ. "You know who that man was, I suppose?" he said.

"I reckon it was that 'er prize-fighter belongin' to that high-toned lady," returned Allen simply. "But he don't know anything about *rastlin'*, b' gosh; only that I was afraid o' bringin' on that heart trouble, I mout hev hurt him bad."

"They think" — hesitated Kane, "that — I — was rough in my treatment of that woman and maliciously cut off her hair. This attack was revenge — or" — he hesitated still more, as he remembered Dr. Sparlow's indication of the woman's feeling — "or that bully's idea of revenge."

"I see," nodded Allen, opening his small sympathetic eyes on Kane with an exasperating air of secrecy — "just jealousy."

Kane reddened in sheer hopelessness of explanation. "No; it was earning his wages, as he thought."

"Never ye mind, pard," said Allen confidentially. "I 'll set 'em both right. Ye see, this sorter gives me a show to call at that thar restaurant and give *him* back his six-shooter, and set her on the right trail for you. Why, Lordy! I was here when you was fixin' her — I 'm testimony o' the way you did it — and she 'll remember me. I 'll sorter waltz round thar this afternoon. But I reckon I won't be keepin' *you* from your work any longer. And look yar! — I say, pard! — this is seein' life in 'Frisco — ain't it? Gosh! I 've had more high times in this very shop in *two* days, than I 've had in two years of St. Jo. So long, Mr. Kane!" He waved his hand, lounged slowly out of the shop, gave a parting glance up the street, passed the window, and was gone.

The next day being a half-holiday for Kane, he did not reach the shop until afternoon. "Your mining friend Allen has been here," said Dr. Sparlow. "I took the liberty

of introducing myself, and induced him to let me carefully examine him. He was a little shy, and I am sorry for it, as I fear he has some serious organic trouble with his heart and ought to have a more thorough examination." Seeing Kane's unaffected concern, he added, "You might influence him to do so. He 's a good fellow and ought to take some care of himself. By the way, he told me to tell you that he 'd seen Madame le Blanc and made it all right about you. He seems to be quite infatuated with the woman."

"I 'm sorry he ever saw her," said Kane bitterly.

"Well, his seeing her seems to have saved the shop from being smashed up, and you from getting a punched head," returned the Doctor, with a laugh. "He 's no fool — yet it 's a freak of human nature that a simple hayseed like that — a man who 's lived in the backwoods all his life, is likely to be the first to tumble before a pot of French rouge like her."

Indeed, in a couple of weeks, there was no further doubt of Mr. Reuben Allen's infatuation. He dropped into the shop frequently on his way to and from the restaurant, where he now regularly took his meals; he spent his evenings in gambling in its private room. Yet Kane was by no means sure that he was losing his money there unfairly, or that he was used as a pigeon by the proprietress and her friends. The bully O'Ryan was turned away; Sparlow grimly suggested that Allen had simply taken his place, but Kane ingeniously retorted that the Doctor was only piqued because Allen had evaded his professional treatment. Certainly the patient had never consented to another examination, although he repeatedly and gravely bought medicines, and was a generous customer. Once or twice Kane thought it his duty to caution Allen against his new friends and enlighten him as to Madame le Blanc's reputation, but his suggestions were received with a good-humored submission that was either the effect of unbelief

or of perfect resignation to the fact, and he desisted. One morning Dr. Sparlow said cheerfully: —

"Would you like to hear the last thing about your friend and the Frenchwoman? The boys can't account for her singling out a fellow like that for her friend, so they say that the night that she cut herself at the *fête* and dropped in here for assistance, she found nobody here but Allen — a chance customer! That it was *he* who cut off her hair and bound up her wounds in that sincere fashion, and she believed he had saved her life." The Doctor grinned maliciously as he added: "And as that 's the way history is written you see your reputation is safe."

It may have been a month later that San Francisco was thrown into a paroxysm of horror and indignation over the assassination of a prominent citizen and official in the gambling-rooms of Madame le Blanc, at the hands of a notorious gambler. The gambler had escaped, but in one of those rare spasms of vengeful morality which sometimes overtake communities who have too long winked at and suffered the existence of evil, the fair proprietress and her whole *entourage* were arrested and haled before the coroner's jury at the inquest. The greatest excitement prevailed; it was said that if the jury failed in their duty, the Vigilance Committee had arranged for the destruction of the establishment and the deportation of its inmates. The crowd that had collected around the building was reinforced by Kane and Dr. Sparlow, who had closed their shop in the next block to attend. When Kane had fought his way into the building and the temporary court, held in the splendidly furnished gambling saloon, whose gilded mirrors reflected the eager faces of the crowd, the Chief of Police was giving his testimony in a formal official manner, impressive only for its relentless and impassive revelation of the character and antecedents of the proprietress. The house had been long under the espionage of the police;

Madame le Blanc had a dozen aliases; she was "wanted" in New Orleans, in New York, in Havana! It was in *her* house that Dyer, the bank clerk, committed suicide; it was there that Colonel Hooley was set upon by her bully, O'Ryan; it was she — Kane heard with reddening cheeks — who defied the police with riotous conduct at a *fête* two months ago. As he coolly recited the counts of this shameful indictment, Kane looked eagerly around for Allen, whom he knew had been arrested as a witness. How would *he* take this terrible disclosure? He was sitting with the others, his arm thrown over the back of his chair, and his good-humored face turned towards the woman, in his old confidential attitude. *She*, gorgeously dressed, painted, but unblushing, was cool, collected, and cynical.

The Coroner next called the only witness of the actual tragedy, "Reuben Allen." The man did not move nor change his position. The summons was repeated; a policeman touched him on the shoulder. There was a pause, and the officer announced: "He has fainted, your Honor!"

"Is there a physician present?" asked the Coroner.

Sparlow edged his way quickly to the front. "I 'm a medical man," he said to the Coroner, as he passed quickly to the still, upright, immovable figure and knelt beside it with his head upon his heart. There was an awed silence as, after a pause, he rose slowly to his feet.

"The witness is a patient, your Honor, whom I examined some weeks ago and found suffering from valvular disease of the heart. He is dead."

BOHEMIAN DAYS IN SAN FRANCISCO

It is but just to the respectable memory of San Francisco that in these vagrant recollections I should deprecate at once any suggestion that the levity of my title described its dominant tone at any period of my early experiences. On the contrary, it was a singular fact that while the rest of California was swayed by an easy, careless unconventionalism, or swept over by waves of emotion and sentiment, San Francisco preserved an intensely material and practical attitude, and even a certain austere morality. I do not, of course, allude to the brief days of '49, when it was a straggling beach of huts and stranded hulks, but to the earlier stages of its development into the metropolis of California. Its first tottering steps in that direction were marked by a distinct gravity and decorum. Even during the period when the revolver settled small private difficulties, and Vigilance Committees adjudicated larger public ones, an unmistakable seriousness and respectability was the ruling sign of its governing class. It was not improbable that under the reign of the Committee the lawless and vicious class were more appalled by the moral spectacle of several thousand black-coated, serious-minded business men in embattled procession than by mere force of arms, and one "suspect" — a prize-fighter — is known to have committed suicide in his cell after confrontation with his grave and passionless shopkeeping judges. Even that peculiar quality of Californian humor which was apt to mitigate the extravagances of the revolver and the uncertainties of poker had no place in the decorous and responsible utterance of

San Francisco. The press was sober, materialistic, practical — when it was not severely admonitory of existing evil; the few smaller papers that indulged in levity were considered libelous and improper. Fancy was displaced by heavy articles on the revenues of the State and inducements to the investment of capital. Local news was under an implied censorship which suppressed anything that might tend to discourage timid or cautious capital. Episodes of romantic lawlessness or pathetic incidents of mining life were carefully edited — with the comment that these things belonged to the past, and that life and property were now "as safe in San Francisco as in New York or London."

Wonder-loving visitors in quest of scenes characteristic of the civilization were coldly snubbed with this assurance. Fires, floods, and even seismic convulsions were subjected to a like grimly materialistic optimism. I have a vivid recollection of a ponderous editorial on one of the severer earthquakes, in which it was asserted that only the *unexpectedness* of the onset prevented San Francisco from meeting it in a way that would be deterrent of all future attacks. The unconsciousness of the humor was only equaled by the gravity with which it was received by the whole business community. Strangely enough, this grave materialism flourished side by side with — and was even sustained by — a narrow religious strictness more characteristic of the Pilgrim Fathers of a past century than the Western pioneers of the present. San Francisco was early a city of churches and church organizations to which the leading men and merchants belonged. The lax Sundays of the dying Spanish race seemed only to provoke a revival of the rigors of the Puritan Sabbath. With the Spaniard and his Sunday afternoon bullfight scarcely an hour distant, the San Francisco pulpit thundered against Sunday picnics. One of the popular preachers, declaiming upon the practice of Sunday dinner-giving, averred that when he saw a guest in his best

Sunday clothes standing shamelessly upon the doorstep of his host, he felt like seizing him by the shoulder and dragging him from that threshold of perdition.

Against the actual heathen the feeling was even stronger, and reached its climax one Sunday when a Chinaman was stoned to death by a crowd of children returning from Sunday-school. I am offering these examples with no ethical purpose, but merely to indicate a singular contradictory condition which I do not think writers of early Californian history have fairly recorded. It is not my province to suggest any theory for these appalling exceptions to the usual good-humored lawlessness and extravagance of the rest of the State. They may have been essential agencies to the growth and evolution of the city. They were undoubtedly sincere. The impressions I propose to give of certain scenes and incidents of my early experience must, therefore, be taken as purely personal and Bohemian, and their selection as equally individual and vagrant. I am writing of what interested me at the time, though not perhaps of what was more generally characteristic of San Francisco.

I had been there a week — an idle week, spent in listless outlook for employment; a full week in my eager absorption of the strange life around me and a photographic sensitiveness to certain scenes and incidents of those days, which start out of my memory to-day as freshly as the day they impressed me.

One of these recollections is of "steamer night," as it was called, — the night of "steamer day," — preceding the departure of the mail steamship with the mails for "home." Indeed, at that time San Francisco may be said to have lived from steamer day to steamer day; bills were made due on that day, interest computed to that period, and accounts settled. The next day was the turning of a new leaf: another essay to fortune, another inspiration of en-

ergy. So recognized was the fact that even ordinary changes of condition, social and domestic, were put aside until *after* steamer day. "I 'll see what I can do after next steamer day" was the common cautious or hopeful formula. It was the "Saturday night" of many a wage-earner — and to him a night of festivity. The thoroughfares were animated and crowded; the saloons and theatres full. I can recall myself at such times wandering along the City Front, as the business part of San Francisco was then known. Here the lights were burning all night, the first streaks of dawn finding the merchants still at their counting-house desks. I remember the dim lines of warehouses lining the insecure wharves of rotten piles, half filled in — that had ceased to be wharves, but had not yet become streets, — their treacherous yawning depths, with the uncertain gleam of tar-like mud below, at times still vocal with the lap and gurgle of the tide. I remember the weird stories of disappearing men found afterward imbedded in the ooze in which they had fallen and gasped their life away. I remember the two or three ships, still left standing where they were beached a year or two before, built in between warehouses, their bows projecting into the roadway. There was the dignity of the sea and its boundless freedom in their beautiful curves, which the abutting houses could not destroy, and even something of the sea's loneliness in the far-spaced ports and cabin windows lit up by the lamps of the prosaic landsmen who plied their trades behind them. One of these ships, transformed into a hotel, retained its name, the Niantic, and part of its characteristic interior unchanged. I remember these ships' old tenants — the rats — who had increased and multiplied to such an extent that at night they fearlessly crossed the wayfarer's path at every turn, and even invaded the gilded saloons of Montgomery Street. In the Niantic their pit-a-pat was met on every staircase, and it was said that sometimes in an excess

of sociability they accompanied the traveler to his room. In the early "cloth-and-papered" houses — so called because the ceilings were not plastered, but simply covered by stretched and whitewashed cloth — their scamperings were plainly indicated in zigzag movements of the sagging cloth, or they became actually visible by finally dropping through the holes they had worn in it. I remember the house whose foundations were made of boxes of plug tobacco — part of a jettisoned cargo — used instead of more expensive lumber; and the adjacent warehouse where the trunks of the early and forgotten "forty-niners" were stored, and — never claimed by their dead or missing owners — were finally sold at auction. I remember the strong breath of the sea over all, and the constant onset of the trade winds which helped to disinfect the deposit of dirt and grime, decay and wreckage, which were stirred up in the later evolutions of the city.

Or I recall, with the same sense of youthful satisfaction and unabated wonder, my wanderings through the Spanish Quarter, where three centuries of quaint customs, speech, and dress were still preserved; where the proverbs of Sancho Panza were still spoken in the language of Cervantes, and the high-flown illusions of the La Manchian knight still a part of the Spanish Californian hidalgo's dream. I recall the more modern "Greaser," or Mexican — his index finger steeped in cigarette stains; his velvet jacket and his crimson sash; the many-flounced skirt and lace manta of his women, and their caressing intonations — the one musical utterance of the whole hard-voiced city. I suppose I had a boy's digestion and bluntness of taste in those days, for the combined odor of tobacco, burned paper, and garlic, which marked that melodious breath, did not affect me.

Perhaps from my Puritan training I experienced a more fearful joy in the gambling saloons. They were the largest and most comfortable, even as they were the most expen-

sively decorated rooms in San Francisco. Here again the gravity and decorum which I have already alluded to were present at that earlier period — though perhaps from concentration of another kind. People staked and lost their last dollar with a calm solemnity and a resignation that was almost Christian. The oaths, exclamations, and feverish interruptions which often characterized more dignified assemblies were absent here. There was no room for the lesser vices; there was little or no drunkenness; the gaudily dressed and painted women who presided over the wheels of fortune or performed on the harp and piano attracted no attention from those ascetic players. The man who had won ten thousand dollars and the man who had lost everything rose from the table with equal silence and imperturbability. *I* never witnessed any tragic sequel to those losses; *I* never heard of any suicide on account of them. Neither can I recall any quarrel or murder directly attributable to this kind of gambling. It must be remembered that these public games were chiefly rouge et noir, monté, faro, or roulette, in which the antagonist was Fate, Chance, Method, or the impersonal "bank," which was supposed to represent them all; there was no individual opposition or rivalry; nobody challenged the decision of the "croupier," or dealer.

I remember a conversation at the door of one saloon which was as characteristic for its brevity as it was a type of the prevailing stoicism. "Hello!" said a departing miner, as he recognized a brother miner coming in, "when did you come down?" "This morning," was the reply. "Made a strike on the bar?" suggested the first speaker. "You bet!" said the other, and passed in. I chanced an hour later to be at the same place as they met again — their relative positions changed. "Hello! Whar now?" said the incomer. "Back to the bar." "Cleaned out?" "You bet!" Not a word more explained a common situation.

My first youthful experience at those tables was an accidental one. I was watching roulette one evening, intensely absorbed in the mere movement of the players. Either they were so preoccupied with the game, or I was really older looking than my actual years, but a bystander laid his hand familiarly on my shoulder, and said, as to an ordinary *habitué*, "Ef you 're not chippin' in yourself, pardner, s'pose you give *me* a show." Now, I honestly believe that up to that moment I had no intention, nor even a desire, to try my own fortune. But in the embarrassment of the sudden address I put my hand in my pocket, drew out a coin, and laid it, with an attempt at carelessness, but a vivid consciousness that I was blushing, upon a vacant number. To my horror I saw that I had put down a large coin — the bulk of my possessions! I did not flinch, however; I think any boy who reads this will understand my feeling; it was not only my coin but my manhood at stake. I gazed with a miserable show of indifference at the players, at the chandelier — anywhere but at the dreadful ball spinning round the wheel. There was a pause; the game was declared, the rake rattled up and down, but still I did not look at the table. Indeed, in my inexperience of the game and my embarrassment, I doubt if I should have known if I had won or not. I had made up my mind that I should lose, but I must do so like a man, and, above all, without giving the least suspicion that I was a greenhorn. I even affected to be listening to the music. The wheel spun again; the game was declared, the rake was busy, but I did not move. At last the man I had displaced touched me on the arm and whispered, "Better make a straddle and divide your stake this time." I did not understand him, but as I saw he was looking at the board, I was obliged to look, too. I drew back dazed and bewildered! Where my coin had lain a moment before was a glittering heap of gold.

My stake had doubled, quadrupled, and doubled again. I did not know how much then — I do not know now — it may have been not more than three or four hundred dollars — but it dazzled and frightened me. "Make your game, gentlemen," said the croupier monotonously. I thought he looked at me — indeed, everybody seemed to be looking at me — and my companion repeated his warning. But here I must again appeal to the boyish reader in defense of my idiotic obstinacy. To have taken advice would have shown my youth. I shook my head — I could not trust my voice. I smiled, but with a sinking heart, and let my stake remain. The ball again sped round the wheel, and stopped. There was a pause. The croupier indolently advanced his rake and swept my whole pile with others into the bank! I had lost it all. Perhaps it may be difficult for me to explain why I actually felt relieved, and even to some extent triumphant, but I seemed to have asserted my grown-up independence — possibly at the cost of reducing the number of my meals for days; but what of that! I was a man! I wish I could say that it was a lesson to me. I am afraid it was not. It was true that I did not gamble again, but then I had no especial desire to — and there was no temptation. I am afraid it was an incident without a moral. Yet it had one touch characteristic of the period which I like to remember. The man who had spoken to me, I think, suddenly realized, at the moment of my disastrous *coup*, the fact of my extreme youth. He moved toward the banker, and leaning over him whispered a few words. The banker looked up, half impatiently, half kindly, — his hand straying tentatively toward the pile of coin. I instinctively knew what he meant, and, summoning my determination, met his eyes with all the indifference I could assume, and walked away.

I had at that period a small room at the top of a house owned by a distant relation — a second or third cousin, I

think. He was a man of independent and original character, had a Ulyssean experience of men and cities, and an old English name of which he was proud. While in London he had procured from the Heralds' College his family arms, whose crest was stamped upon a quantity of plate he had brought with him to California. The plate, together with an exceptionally good cook, which he had also brought, and his own epicurean tastes, he utilized in the usual practical Californian fashion by starting a rather expensive half-club, half-restaurant in the lower part of the building — which he ruled somewhat autocratically, as became his crest. The restaurant was too expensive for me to patronize, but I saw many of its frequenters as well as those who had rooms at the club. They were men of very distinct personality; a few celebrated, and nearly all notorious. They represented a Bohemianism — if such it could be called — less innocent than my later experiences. I remember, however, one handsome young fellow whom I used to meet occasionally on the staircase, who captured my youthful fancy. I met him only at midday, as he did not rise till late, and this fact, with a certain scrupulous elegance and neatness in his dress, ought to have made me suspect that he was a gambler. In my inexperience it only invested him with a certain romantic mystery.

One morning as I was going out to my very early breakfast at a cheap Italian café on Long Wharf, I was surprised to find him also descending the staircase. He was scrupulously dressed even at that early hour, but I was struck by the fact that he was all in black, and his slight figure, buttoned to the throat in a tightly fitting frock coat, gave, I fancied, a singular melancholy to his pale Southern face. Nevertheless, he greeted me with more than his usual serene cordiality, and I remembered that he looked up with a half-puzzled, half-amused expression at the rosy morning sky as he walked a few steps with me down the deserted

street. I could not help saying that I was astonished to see him up so early, and he admitted that it was a break in his usual habits, but added with a smiling significance I afterwards remembered that it was "an even chance if he did it again." As we neared the street corner a man in a buggy drove up impatiently. In spite of the driver's evident haste, my handsome acquaintance got in leisurely, and, lifting his glossy hat to me with a pleasant smile, was driven away. I have a very lasting recollection of his face and figure as the buggy disappeared down the empty street. I never saw him again. It was not until a week later that I knew that an hour after he left me that morning he was lying dead in a little hollow behind the Mission Dolores — shot through the heart in a duel for which he had risen so early.

I recall another incident of that period, equally characteristic, but happily less tragic in sequel. I was in the restaurant one morning talking to my cousin when a man entered hastily and said something to him in a hurried whisper. My cousin contracted his eyebrows and uttered a suppressed oath. Then with a gesture of warning to the man he crossed the room quietly to a table where a regular *habitué* of the restaurant was lazily finishing his breakfast. A large silver coffee-pot with a stiff wooden handle stood on the table before him. My cousin leaned over the guest familiarly and apparently made some hospitable inquiry as to his wants, with his hand resting lightly on the coffee-pot handle. Then — possibly because, my curiosity having been excited, I was watching him more intently than the others — *I* saw what probably no one else saw — that he deliberately upset the coffee-pot and its contents over the guest's shirt and waistcoat. As the victim sprang up with an exclamation, my cousin overwhelmed him with apologies for his carelessness, and, with protestations of sorrow for the accident, actually insisted upon dragging the man up-

stairs into his own private room, where he furnished him with a shirt and waistcoat of his own. The side door had scarcely closed upon them, and I was still lost in wonder at what I had seen, when a man entered from the street. He was one of the desperate set I have already spoken of, and thoroughly well known to those present. He cast a glance around the room, nodded to one or two of the guests, and then walked to a side table and took up a newspaper. I was conscious at once that a singular constraint had come over the other guests — a nervous awkwardness that at last seemed to make itself known to the man himself, who, after an affected yawn or two, laid down the paper and walked out.

"That was a mighty close call," said one of the guests with a sigh of relief.

"You bet! And that coffee-pot spill was the luckiest kind of accident for Peters," returned another.

"For both," added the first speaker, "for Peters was armed too, and would have seen him come in!"

A word or two explained all. Peters and the last comer had quarreled a day or two before, and had separated with the intention to "shoot on sight," that is, wherever they met, — a form of duel common to those days. The accidental meeting in the restaurant would have been the occasion, with the usual sanguinary consequence, but for the word of warning given to my cousin by a passer-by who knew that Peters's antagonist was coming to the restaurant to look at the papers. Had my cousin repeated the warning to Peters himself he would only have prepared him for the conflict — which he would not have shirked — and so precipitated the affray.

The ruse of upsetting the coffee-pot, which everybody but myself thought an accident, was to get him out of the room before the other entered. I was too young then to venture to intrude upon my cousin's secrets, but two or

three years afterwards I taxed him with the trick and he admitted it regretfully. I believe that a strict interpretation of the "code" would have condemned his act as unsportsmanlike, if not *unfair!*

I recall another incident, connected with the building, equally characteristic of the period. The United States Branch Mint stood very near it, and its tall, factory-like chimneys overshadowed my cousin's roof. Some scandal had arisen from an alleged leakage of gold in the manipulation of that metal during the various processes of smelting and refining. One of the excuses offered was the volatilization of the precious metal and its escape through the draft of the tall chimneys. All San Francisco laughed at this explanation until it learned that a corroboration of the theory had been established by an assay of the dust and grime of the roofs in the vicinity of the Mint. These had yielded distinct traces of gold. San Francisco stopped laughing, and that portion of it which had roofs in the neighborhood at once began prospecting. Claims were staked out on these airy placers, and my cousin's roof, being the very next one to the chimney, and presumably "in the lead," was disposed of to a speculative company for a considerable sum. I remember my cousin telling me the story — for the occurrence was quite recent — and taking me with him to the roof to explain it, but I am afraid I was more attracted by the mystery of the closely guarded building, and the strangely tinted smoke which arose from this temple where money was actually being "made," than by anything else. Nor did I dream as I stood there — a very lanky, open-mouthed youth — that only three or four years later I should be the secretary of its superintendent. In my more adventurous ambition I am afraid I would have accepted the suggestion half-heartedly. Merely to have helped to stamp the gold which other people had adventurously found was by no means a part of my youthful dreams.

At the time of these earlier impressions the Chinese had not yet become the recognized factors in the domestic and business economy of the city which they had come to be when I returned from the mines three years later. Yet they were even then a more remarkable and picturesque contrast to the bustling, breathless, and brand-new life of San Francisco than the Spaniard. The latter seldom flaunted his faded dignity in the principal thoroughfares. "John" was to be met everywhere. It was a common thing to see a long file of sampan coolies carrying their baskets slung between them, on poles, jostling a modern, well-dressed crowd in Montgomery Street, or to get a whiff of their burned punk in the side streets; while the road leading to their temporary burial-ground at Lone Mountain was littered with slips of colored paper scattered from their funerals. They brought an atmosphere of the Arabian Nights into the hard, modern civilization; their shops — not always confined at that time to a Chinese quarter — were replicas of the bazaars of Canton and Peking, with their quaint display of little dishes on which tidbits of food delicacies were exposed for sale, all of the dimensions and unreality of a doll's kitchen or a child's housekeeping.

They were a revelation to the Eastern immigrant, whose preconceived ideas of them were borrowed from the ballet or pantomime; they did not wear scalloped drawers and hats with jingling bells on their points, nor did I ever see them dance with their forefingers vertically extended. They were always neatly dressed, even the commonest of coolies, and their festive dresses were marvels. As traders they were grave and patient; as servants they were sad and civil, and all were singularly infantine in their natural simplicity. The living representatives of the oldest civilization in the world, they seemed like children. Yet they kept their beliefs and sympathies to themselves, never fraternizing with the *fanqui*, or foreign devil, or losing their

singular racial qualities. They indulged in their own peculiar habits; of their social and inner life, San Francisco knew but little and cared less. Even at this early period, and before I came to know them more intimately, I remember an incident of their daring fidelity to their own customs that was accidentally revealed to me. I had become acquainted with a Chinese youth of about my own age, as I imagined, — although from mere outward appearance it was generally impossible to judge of a Chinaman's age between the limits of seventeen and forty years, — and he had, in a burst of confidence, taken me to see some characteristic sights in a Chinese warehouse within a stone's throw of the Plaza. I was struck by the singular circumstance that while the warehouse was an erection of wood in the ordinary hasty Californian style, there were certain brick and stone divisions in its interior, like small rooms or closets, evidently added by the Chinamen tenants. My companion stopped before a long, very narrow entrance, a mere longitudinal slit in the brick wall, and with a wink of infantine deviltry motioned me to look inside. I did so, and saw a room, really a cell, of fair height but scarcely six feet square, and barely able to contain a rude, slanting couch of stone covered with matting, on which lay, at a painful angle, a richly dressed Chinaman. A single glance at his staring, abstracted eyes and half-opened mouth showed me he was in an opium trance. This was not in itself a novel sight, and I was moving away when I was suddenly startled by the appearance of his hands, which were stretched helplessly before him on his body, and at first sight seemed to be in a kind of wicker cage.

I then saw that his finger-nails were seven or eight inches long, and were supported by bamboo splints. Indeed, they were no longer human nails, but twisted and distorted quills, giving him the appearance of having gigantic claws. "Velly big Chinaman," whispered my cheerful friend;

"first-chop man — high classee — no can washee — no can eat — no dlinke, no catchee him own glub allee same nothee man — China boy must catchee glub for him, allee time! Oh, him first-chop man — you bet-tee!"

I had heard of this singular custom of indicating caste before, and was amazed and disgusted, but I was not prepared for what followed. My companion, evidently thinking he had impressed me, grew more reckless as showman, and saying to me, "Now me showee you one funny thing — heap makee you laugh," led me hurriedly across a little courtyard swarming with chickens and rabbits, when he stopped before another inclosure. Suddenly brushing past an astonished Chinaman who seemed to be standing guard, he thrust me into the inclosure in front of a most extraordinary object. It was a Chinaman, wearing a huge, square, wooden frame fastened around his neck like a collar, and fitting so tightly and rigidly that the flesh rose in puffy weals around his cheeks. He was chained to a post, although it was as impossible for him to have escaped with his wooden cage through the narrow doorway as it was for him to lie down and rest in it. Yet I am bound to say that his eyes and face expressed nothing but apathy, and there was no appeal to the sympathy of the stranger. My companion said hurriedly,—

"Velly bad man; stealee heap from Chinaman," and then, apparently alarmed at his own indiscreet intrusion, hustled me away as quickly as possible amid a shrill cackling of protestation from a few of his own countrymen who had joined the one who was keeping guard. In another moment we were in the street again — scarce a step from the Plaza, in the full light of Western civilization — not a stone's throw from the courts of justice.

My companion took to his heels and left me standing there bewildered and indignant. I could not rest until I had told my story, but without betraying my companion, to an elder

acquaintance, who laid the facts before the police authorities. I had expected to be closely cross-examined — to be doubted — to be disbelieved. To my surprise, I was told that the police had already cognizance of similar cases of illegal and barbarous punishments, but that the victims themselves refused to testify against their countrymen — and it was impossible to convict or even to identify them. "A white man can't tell one Chinese from another, and there are always a dozen of 'em ready to swear that the man you 've got is n't the one." I was startled to reflect that I, too, could not have conscientiously sworn to either jailor or the tortured prisoner — or perhaps even to my cheerful companion. The police, on some pretext, made a raid upon the premises a day or two afterwards, but without result. I wondered if they had caught sight of the high-class, first-chop individual, with the helplessly outstretched fingers, as that story I had kept to myself.

But these barbaric vestiges in John Chinaman's habits did not affect his relations with the San Franciscans. He was singularly peaceful, docile, and harmless as a servant, and, with rare exceptions, honest and temperate. If he sometimes matched cunning with cunning, it was the flattery of imitation. He did most of the menial work of San Francisco, and did it cleanly. Except that he exhaled a peculiar druglike odor, he was not personally offensive in domestic contact, and by virtue of being the recognized laundryman of the whole community his own blouses were always freshly washed and ironed. His conversational reserve arose, not from his having to deal with an unfamiliar language, — for he had picked up a picturesque and varied vocabulary with ease, — but from his natural temperament. He was devoid of curiosity, and utterly unimpressed by anything but the purely business concerns of those he served. Domestic secrets were safe with him; his indifference to your thoughts, actions, and feelings had all the con-

tempt which his three thousand years of history and his innate belief in your inferiority seemed to justify. He was blind and deaf in your household because you did n't interest him in the least. It was said that a gentleman who wished to test his impassiveness, arranged with his wife to come home one day and, in the hearing of his Chinese waiter — who was more than usually intelligent — to disclose with well-simulated emotion the details of a murder he had just committed. He did so. The Chinaman heard it without a sign of horror or attention even to the lifting of an eyelid, but continued his duties unconcerned. Unfortunately, the gentleman, in order to increase the horror of the situation, added that now there was nothing left for him but to cut his throat. At this John quietly left the room. The gentleman was delighted at the success of hi ruse until the door reopened and John reappeared with his master's razor, which he quietly slipped — as if it had been a forgotten fork — beside his master's plate, and calmly resumed his serving. I have always considered this story to be quite as improbable as it was inartistic, from its tacit admission of a certain interest on the part of the Chinaman. *I* never knew one who would have been sufficiently concerned to go for the razor.

His taciturnity and reticence may have been confounded with rudeness of address, although he was always civil enough. "I see you have listened to me and done exactly what I told you," said a lady, commending some performance of her servant after a previous lengthy lecture; "that 's very nice." "Yes," said John calmly, "you talkee allee time; talkee allee too much." "I always find Ling very polite," said another lady, speaking of her cook, "but I wish he did not always say to me, 'Good-night, John,' in a high falsetto voice." She had not recognized the fact that he was simply repeating her own salutation with his marvelous instinct of relentless imitation, even as to voice. I

hesitate to record the endless stories of his misapplication of that faculty which were then current, from the one of the laundryman who removed the buttons from the shirts that were sent to him to wash that they might agree with the condition of the one offered him as a pattern for "doing up," to that of the unfortunate employer who, while showing John how to handle valuable china carefully, had the misfortune to drop a plate himself — an accident which was followed by the prompt breaking of another by the neophyte, with the addition of "Oh, hellee!" in humble imitation of his master.

I have spoken of his general cleanliness; I am reminded of one or two exceptions, which I think, however, were errors of zeal. His manner of sprinkling clothes in preparing them for ironing was peculiar. He would fill his mouth with perfectly pure water from a glass beside him, and then, by one dexterous movement of his lips in a prolonged expiration, squirt the water in an almost invisible misty shower on the article before him. Shocking as this was at first to the sensibilities of many American employers, it was finally accepted, and even commended. It was some time after this that the mistress of a household, admiring the deft way in which her cook had spread a white sauce on certain dishes, was cheerfully informed that the method was "allee same."

His recreations at that time were chiefly gambling, for the Chinese theatre wherein the latter produced his plays (which lasted for several months and comprised the events of a whole dynasty) was not yet built. But he had one or two companies of jugglers who occasionally performed also at American theatres. I remember a singular incident which attended the début of a newly arrived company. It seemed that the company had been taken on their Chinese reputation solely, and there had been no previous rehearsal before the American stage manager. The theatre was filled

with an audience of decorous and respectable San Franciscans of both sexes. It was suddenly emptied in the middle of the performance; the curtain came down with an alarmed and blushing manager apologizing to deserted benches, and the show abruptly terminated. Exactly *what* had happened never appeared in the public papers, nor in the published apology of the manager. It afforded a few days' mirth for wicked San Francisco, and it was epigrammatically summed up in the remark that "no woman could be found in San Francisco who was at that performance, and no man who was not." Yet it was alleged even by John's worst detractors that he was innocent of any intended offense. Equally innocent, but perhaps more morally instructive, was an incident that brought his career as a singularly successful physician to a disastrous close. An ordinary native Chinese doctor, practising entirely among his own countrymen, was reputed to have made extraordinary cures with two or three American patients. With no other advertising than this, and apparently no other inducement offered to the public than what their curiosity suggested, he was presently besieged by hopeful and eager sufferers. Hundreds of patients were turned away from his crowded doors. Two interpreters sat, day and night, translating the ills of ailing San Francisco to this medical oracle, and dispensing his prescriptions — usually small powders — in exchange for current coin. In vain the regular practitioners pointed out that the Chinese possessed no superior medical knowledge, and that their religion, which proscribed dissection and autopsies, naturally limited their understanding of the body into which they put their drugs. Finally they prevailed upon an eminent Chinese authority to give them a list of the remedies generally used in the Chinese pharmacopœia, and this was privately circulated. For obvious reasons I may not repeat it here. But it was summed up — again after the usual Californian epigrammatic style — by the re-

mark that "whatever were the comparative merits of Chinese and American practice, a simple perusal of the list would prove that the Chinese were capable of producing the most powerful emetic known." The craze subsided in a single day; the interpreters and their oracle vanished; the Chinese doctors' signs, which had multiplied, disappeared, and San Francisco awoke cured of its madness, at the cost of some thousand dollars.

My Bohemian wanderings were confined to the limits of the city, for the very good reason that there was little elsewhere to go. San Francisco was then bounded on one side by the monotonously restless waters of the bay, and on the other by a stretch of equally restless and monotonously shifting sand dunes as far as the Pacific shore. Two roads penetrated this waste: one to Lone Mountain — the cemetery; the other to the Cliff House — happily described as "an eight-mile drive with a cocktail at the end of it." Nor was the humor entirely confined to this felicitous description. The Cliff House itself, half restaurant, half drinking-saloon, fronting the ocean and the Seal Rock, where disporting seals were the chief object of interest, had its own peculiar symbol. The decanters, wine-glasses, and tumblers at the bar were all engraved in old English script with the legal initials "L. S." (*Locus Sigilli*), — "the place of the seal."

On the other hand, Lone Mountain, a dreary promontory giving upon the Golden Gate and its striking sunsets, had little to soften its weird suggestiveness. As the common goal of the successful and unsuccessful, the carved and lettered shaft of the man who had made a name, and the staring blank headboard of the man who had none, climbed the sandy slopes together. I have seen the funerals of the respectable citizen who had died peacefully in his bed, and the notorious desperado who had died "with his boots on," followed by an equally impressive cortège of sorrowing

friends, and often the self-same priest. But more awful than its barren loneliness was the utter absence of peacefulness and rest in this dismal promontory. By some wicked irony of its situation and climate it was the personification of unrest and change. The incessant trade winds carried its loose sands hither and thither, uncovering the decaying coffins of early pioneers, to bury the wreaths and flowers, laid on a grave of to-day, under their obliterating waves. No tree to shade them from the glaring sky above could live in those sands, no turf would lie there to resist the encroaching sand below. The dead were harried and hustled even in their graves by the persistent sun, the unremitting wind, and the unceasing sea. The departing mourner saw the contour of the very mountain itself change with the shifting dunes as he passed, and his last look beyond rested on the hurrying, eager waves forever hastening to the Golden Gate.

If I were asked to say what one thing impressed me as the dominant and characteristic note of San Francisco, I should say it was this untiring presence of sun and wind and sea. They typified, even if they were not, as I sometimes fancied, the actual incentive to the fierce, restless life of the city. I could not think of San Francisco without the trade winds; I could not imagine its strange, incongruous, multigenerous procession marching to any other music. They were always there in my youthful recollections; they were there in my more youthful dreams of the past as the mysterious *vientes generales* that blew the Philippine galleons home.

For six months they blew from the northwest, for six months from the southwest, with unvarying persistency. They were there every morning, glittering in the equally persistent sunlight, to chase the San Franciscan from his slumber; they were there at midday, to stir his pulses with their beat; they were there again at night, to hurry him

through the bleak and flaring gas-lit streets to bed. They left their mark on every windward street or fence or gable, on the outlying sand dunes; they lashed the slow coasters home, and hurried them to sea again; they whipped the bay into turbulence on their way to Contra Costa, whose level shoreland oaks they had trimmed to windward as cleanly and sharply as with a pruning-shears. Untiring themselves, they allowed no laggards; they drove the San Franciscan from the wall against which he would have leaned, from the scant shade in which at noontide he might have rested. They turned his smallest fires into conflagrations, and kept him ever alert, watchful, and eager. In return, they scavenged his city and held it clean and wholesome; in summer they brought him the soft sea-fog for a few hours to soothe his abraded surfaces; in winter they brought the rains and dashed the whole coast-line with flowers, and the staring sky above it with soft, unwonted clouds. They were always there — strong, vigilant, relentless, material, unyielding, triumphant.

A VISION OF THE FOUNTAIN

Mr. Jackson Potter halted before the little cottage, half shop, half hostelry, opposite the great gates of Domesday Park, where tickets of admission to that venerable domain were sold. Here Mr. Potter revealed his nationality as a Western American, not only in his accent, but in a certain half-humorous, half-practical questioning of the ticket-seller — as that quasi-official stamped his ticket — which was nevertheless delivered with such unfailing good-humor, and such frank suggestiveness of the perfect equality of the ticket-seller and the well-dressed stranger that, far from producing any irritation, it attracted the pleased attention not only of the official, but his wife and daughter and a customer. Possibly the good looks of the stranger had something to do with it. Jackson Potter was a singularly handsome young fellow, with one of those ideal faces and figures sometimes seen in Western frontier villages, attributable to no ancestor, but evolved possibly from novels and books devoured by ancestresses in the long solitary winter evenings of their lonely cabins on the frontier. A beardless, classical head, covered by short flocculent blonde curls, poised on a shapely neck and shoulders, was more Greek in outline than suggestive of any ordinary American type. Finally, after having thoroughly amused his small audience, he lifted his straw hat to the "ladies," and lounged out across the road to the gateway. Here he paused, consulting his guide-book, and read aloud: "St. John's Gateway. This massive structure, according to Leland, was built in" — murmured — "never mind when;

we 'll pass St. John," marked the page with his pencil, and tendering his ticket to the gate-keeper, heard, with some satisfaction, that, as there were no other visitors just then, and as the cicerone only accompanied *parties*, he would be left to himself, and at once plunged into a by-path.

It was that loveliest of rare creations — a hot summer day in England, with all the dampness of that sea-blown isle wrung out of it, exhaled in the quivering blue vault overhead, or passing as dim wraiths in the distant wood, and all the long-matured growth of that great old garden vivified and made resplendent by the fervid sun. The ashes of dead and gone harvests, even the dust of those who had for ages wrought in it, turned again and again through incessant cultivation, seemed to move and live once more in that present sunshine. All color appeared to be deepened and mellowed, until even the very shadows of the trees were as velvety as the sward they fell upon. The prairie-bred Potter, accustomed to the youthful caprices and extravagances of his own virgin soil, could not help feeling the influence of the ripe restraints of this.

As he glanced through the leaves across green sunlit spaces to the ivy-clad ruins of Domesday Abbey, which seemed itself a growth of the very soil, he murmured to himself: "Things had been made mighty comfortable for folks here, you bet!" Forgotten books he had read as a boy, scraps of school histories, or rather novels, came back to him as he walked along, and peopled the solitude about him with their heroes.

Nevertheless, it was unmistakably hot — a heat homelike in its intensity, yet of a different effect, throwing him into languid reverie rather than filling his veins with fire. Secure in his seclusion in the leafy chase, he took off his jacket and rambled on in his shirt sleeves. Through the opening he presently saw the Abbey again, with the restored wing where the noble owner lived for two or three weeks

in the year, but now given over to the prevailing solitude. And then, leaving from the chase, he came upon a broad, moss-grown terrace. Before him stretched a tangled and luxuriant wilderness of shrubs and flowers, darkened by cypress and cedars of Lebanon; its dim depths illuminated by dazzling white statues, vases, trellises, and paved paths, choked and lost in the trailing growths of years of abandonment and forgetfulness. He consulted his guide-book again. It was the "old Italian garden," constructed under the design of a famous Italian gardener by the third duke; but its studied formality being displeasing to his successor, it was allowed to fall into picturesque decay and negligent profusion, which were not, however, disturbed by later descendants, — a fact deplored by the artistic writer of the guide-book, who mournfully called attention to the rare beauty of the marble statues, urns, and fountains, ruined by neglect, although one or two of the rarer objects had been removed to Deep Dene Lodge, another seat of the present duke.

It is needless to say that Mr. Potter conceived at once a humorous opposition to the artistic enthusiasm of the critic, and, plunging into the garden, took a mischievous delight in its wildness and the victorious struggle of nature with the formality of art. At every step through the tangled labyrinth he could see where precision and order had been invaded, and even the rigid masonry broken or upheaved by the rebellious force. Yet here and there the two powers had combined to offer an example of beauty neither could have effected alone. A passion vine had overrun and enclasped a vase with a perfect symmetry no sculptor could have achieved. A heavy balustrade was made ethereal with a delicate fretwork of vegetation between its balusters like lace. Here, however, the lap and gurgle of water fell gratefully upon the ear of the perspiring and thirsty Mr. Potter, and turned his attention to more material things.

Following the sound, he presently came upon an enormous oblong marble basin containing three time-worn fountains with grouped figures. The pipes were empty, silent, and choked with reeds and water plants, but the great basin itself was filled with water from some invisible source.

A terraced walk occupied one side of the long parallelogram; at intervals and along the opposite bank, half shadowed by willows, tinted marble figures of tritons, fauns, and dryads arose half hidden in the reeds. They were more or less mutilated by time, and here and there only the empty, moss-covered plinths that had once supported them could be seen. But they were so lifelike in their subdued color in the shade that he was for a moment startled.

The water looked deliciously cool. An audacious thought struck him. He was alone, and the place was a secluded one. He knew there were no other visitors; the marble basin was quite hidden from the rest of the garden, and approached only from the path by which he had come, and whose entire view he commanded. He quietly and deliberately undressed himself under the willows, and unhesitatingly plunged into the basin. The water was four or five feet deep, and its extreme length afforded an excellent swimming bath, despite the water-lilies and a few aquatic plants that mottled its clear surface, or the sedge that clung to the bases of the statues. He disported for some moments in the delicious element, and then seated himself upon one of the half-submerged plinths, almost hidden by reeds, that had once upheld a river god. Here, lazily resting himself upon his elbow, half his body still below the water, his quick ear was suddenly startled by a rustling noise and the sound of footsteps. For a moment he was inclined to doubt his senses; he could see only the empty path before him and the deserted terrace. But the sound became more distinct, and to his great uneasiness, appeared to come from the

other side of the fringe of willows, where there was undoubtedly a path to the fountain which he had overlooked. His clothes were under those willows, but he was at least twenty yards from the bank and an equal distance from the terrace. He was about to slip beneath the water when, to his crowning horror, before he could do so, a young girl slowly appeared from the hidden willow path full upon the terrace. She was walking leisurely with a parasol over her head and a book in her hand. Even in his intense consternation her whole figure — a charming one in its white dress, sailor hat, and tan shoes — was imprinted on his memory as she instinctively halted to look upon the fountain, evidently an unexpected surprise to her.

A sudden idea flashed upon him. She was at least sixty yards away; he was half hidden in the reeds and well in the long shadows of the willows. If he remained perfectly motionless she might overlook him at that distance, or take him for one of the statues. He remembered also that as he was resting on his elbow, his half-submerged body lying on the plinth below water, he was somewhat in the attitude of one of the river gods. And there was no other escape. If he dived he might not be able to keep under water as long as she remained, and any movement he knew would betray him. He stiffened himself and scarcely breathed. Luckily for him his attitude had been a natural one and easy to keep. It was well, too, for she was evidently in no hurry and walked slowly, stopping from time to time to admire the basin and its figures. Suddenly he was instinctively aware that she was looking towards him and even changing her position, moving her pretty head and shading her eyes with her hand as if for a better view. He remained motionless, scarcely daring to breathe. Yet there was something so innocently frank and undisturbed in her observation, that he knew as instinctively that she suspected nothing, and took him for a half-submerged statue. He

breathed more freely. But presently she stopped, glanced around her, and, keeping her eyes fixed in his direction, began to walk backwards slowly until she reached a stone balustrade behind her. On this she leaped, and, sitting down, opened in her lap the sketch-book she was carrying, and, taking out a pencil, to his horror began to sketch!

For a wild moment he recurred to his first idea of diving and swimming at all hazards to the bank, but the conviction that now his slightest movement must be detected held him motionless. He must save her the mortification of knowing she was sketching a living man, if he died for it. She sketched rapidly but fixedly and absorbedly, evidently forgetting all else in her work. From time to time she held out her sketch before her to compare it with her subject. Yet the seconds seemed minutes and the minutes hours. Suddenly, to his great relief, a distant voice was heard calling, "Lottie." It was a woman's voice; by its accent it also seemed to him an American one.

The young girl made a slight movement of impatience, but did not look up, and her pencil moved still more rapidly. Again the voice called, this time nearer. The young girl's pencil fairly flew over the paper, as, still without looking up, she lifted a pretty voice and answered back, "Y-e-e-s!"

It struck him that her accent was also that of a compatriot.

"Where on earth are you?" continued the first voice, which now appeared to come from the other side of the willows on the path by which the young girl had approached. "Here, aunty," replied the girl, closing her sketch-book with a snap and starting to her feet.

A stout woman, fashionably dressed, made her appearance from the willow path.

"What have you been doing all this while?" she said querulously. "Not sketching, I hope," she added, with a

suspicious glance at the book. "You know your professor expressly forbade you to do so in your holidays."

The young girl shrugged her shoulders. "I 've been looking at the fountains," she replied evasively.

"And horrid-looking pagan things they are, too," said the elder woman, turning from them disgustedly, without vouchsafing a second glance. "Come. If we expect to do the Abbey, we must hurry up, or we won't catch the train. Your uncle is waiting for us at the top of the garden."

And, to Potter's intense relief, she grasped the young girl's arm and hurried her away, their figures the next moment vanishing in the tangled shrubbery.

Potter lost no time in plunging with his cramped limbs into the water and regaining the other side. Here he quickly half dried himself with some sun-warmed leaves and baked mosses, hurried on his clothes, and hastened off in the opposite direction to the path taken by them, yet with such circuitous skill and speed that he reached the great gateway without encountering anybody. A brisk walk brought him to the station in time to catch a stopping train, and in half an hour he was speeding miles away from Domesday Park and his half-forgotten episode.

. . . . . .

Meantime the two ladies continued on their way to the Abbey. "I don't see why I may n't sketch things I see about me," said the young lady impatiently. "Of course, I understand that I must go through the rudimentary drudgery of my art and study from casts, and learn perspective, and all that; but I can't see what 's the difference between working in a stuffy studio over a hand or arm that I know is only a *study*, and sketching a full or half length in the open air with the wonderful illusion of light and shade and distance — and grouping and combining them all — that one knows and feels makes a picture. The real picture one makes is already in one's self."

She sketched rapidly

"It is a beautiful copy, mademoiselle, and I forgive you breaking my rules," he said, drawing a long breath. "But I cannot now recall the original picture."

"It 's no copy of a picture, professor," said the young girl timidly, and she disclosed her secret. "It was the only perfect statue there," she added diffidently; "but I think it wanted — something."

"True," said the professor abstractedly. "Where the elbow rests there should be a half-inverted urn flowing with water; but the drawing of that shoulder is so perfect — as is *your* study of it — that one guesses the missing forearm one cannot see, which clasped it. Beautiful! beautiful!"

Suddenly he stopped, and turned his eyes almost searchingly on hers.

"You say you have never drawn from the human model, mademoiselle?"

"Never," said the young girl innocently.

"True," murmured the professor again. "These are the classic ideal measurements. There are no limbs like those now. Yet it is wonderful! And this gem, you say, is in England?"

"Yes."

"Good! I am going there in a few days. I shall make a pilgrimage to see it. Until then, mademoiselle, I beg you to break as many of my rules as you like."

Three weeks later she found the professor one morning standing before her picture in her private studio. "You have returned from England," she said joyfully.

"I have," said the professor gravely.

"You have seen the original subject?" she said timidly.

"I have *not*. I have not seen it, mademoiselle," he said, gazing at her mildly through his glasses, "because it does not exist, and never existed."

The young girl turned pale.

"Listen. I have go to England. I arrive at the Park

of Domesday. I penetrate the beautiful, wild garden. I approach the fountain. I see the wonderful water, the exquisite light and shade, the lilies, the mysterious reeds — beautiful, yet not as beautiful as you have made it, mademoiselle, but no statue — no river god! I demand it of the *concierge*. He knows of it absolutely nothing. I transport myself to the noble proprietor, Monsieur le Duc, at a distant château where he has collected the ruined marbles. It is not there."

"Yet I saw it," said the young girl earnestly, yet with a troubled face. "O professor," she burst out appealingly, "what do you think it was?"

"I think, mademoiselle," said the professor gravely, "that you created it. Believe me, it is a function of genius! More, it is a proof, a necessity! You saw the beautiful lake, the ruined fountain, the soft shadows, the empty plinth, curtained by reeds. You yourself say you feel there was 'something wanting.' Unconsciously you yourself supplied it. All that you had ever dreamt of mythology, all that you had ever seen of statuary, thronged upon you at that supreme moment, and, evolved from your own fancy, the river god was born. It is your own, *chère enfant*, as much the offspring of your genius as the exquisite atmosphere you have caught, the charm of light and shadow that you have brought away. Accept my felicitations. You have little more to learn of me."

As he bowed himself out and descended the stairs he shrugged his shoulders slightly. "She is an adorable genius," he murmured. "Yet she is also a woman. Being a woman, naturally she has a lover — this river god! Why not?"

The extraordinary success of Miss Forrest's picture and the instantaneous recognition of her merit as an artist, apart from her novel subject, perhaps went further to remove her uneasiness than any serious conviction of the pro-

fessor's theory. Nevertheless, it appealed to her poetic and mystic imagination, and although other subjects from her brush met with equally phenomenal success, and she was able in a year to return to America with a reputation assured beyond criticism, she never entirely forgot the strange incident connected with her initial effort.

And by degrees a singular change came over her. Rich, famous, and attractive, she began to experience a sentimental and romantic interest in that episode. Once, when reproached by her friends for her indifference to her admirers, she had half laughingly replied that she had once found her "ideal," but never would again. Yet the jest had scarcely passed her lips before she became pale and silent. With this change came also a desire to re-purchase the picture, which she had sold in her early success to a speculative American picture-dealer. On inquiry she found, alas! that it had been sold only a day or two before to a Chicago gentleman, of the name of Potter, who had taken a fancy to it.

Miss Forrest curled her pretty lip, but, nothing daunted, resolved to effect her purpose, and sought the purchaser at his hotel. She was ushered into a private drawing-room, where, on a handsome easel, stood the newly acquired purchase. Mr. Potter was out, "but would return in a moment."

Miss Forrest was relieved, for, alone and undisturbed, she could now let her full soul go out to her romantic creation. As she stood there, she felt the glamour of the old English garden come back to her, the play of light and shadow, the silent pool, the godlike face and bust, with its cast-down, meditative eyes, seen through the parted reeds. She clasped her hands silently before her. Should she never see it again as then?

"Pray don't let me disturb you; but won't you take a seat?"

Miss Forrest turned sharply round. Then she started, uttered a frightened little cry, and fainted away.

Mr. Potter was touched, but a master of himself. As she came to, he said quietly: "I came upon you suddenly — as you stood entranced by this picture — just as I did when I first saw it. That 's why I bought it. Are you any relative of the Miss Forrest who painted it?" he continued, quietly looking at her card, which he held in his hand.

Miss Forrest recovered herself sufficiently to reply, and stated her business with some dignity.

"Ah," said Mr. Potter, "*that* is another question. You see, the picture has a special value to me, as I once saw an old-fashioned garden like that in England. But that chap there, — I beg your pardon, I mean that figure, — I fancy, is your own creation, entirely. However, I 'll think over your proposition, and if you will allow me I 'll call and see you about it."

Mr. Potter did call — not once, but many times — and showed quite a remarkable interest in Miss Forrest's art. The question of the sale of the picture, however, remained in abeyance. A few weeks later, after a longer call than usual, Mr. Potter said, —

"Don't you think the best thing we can do is to make a kind of compromise, and let us own the picture together?"

And they did.

A ROMANCE OF THE LINE

As the train moved slowly out of the station, the Writer of Stories looked up wearily from the illustrated pages of the magazines and weeklies on his lap to the illustrated advertisements on the walls of the station sliding past his carriage windows. It was getting to be monotonous. For a while he had been hopefully interested in the bustle of the departing trains, and looked up from his comfortable and early invested position to the later comers with that sense of superiority common to travelers; had watched the conventional leave-takings — always feebly prolonged to the uneasiness of both parties — and contrasted it with the impassive business promptitude of the railway officials; but it was the old experience repeated. Falling back on the illustrated advertisements again, he wondered if their perpetual recurrence at every station would not at last bring to the tired traveler the loathing of satiety; whether the passenger in railway carriages, continually offered Somebody's oats, inks, washing blue, candles, and soap, apparently as a necessary equipment for a few hours' journey, would not there and thereafter forever ignore the use of these articles, or recoil from that particular quality. Or, as an unbiased observer, he wondered if, on the other hand, impressible passengers, after passing three or four stations, had ever leaped from the train and refused to proceed further until they were supplied with one or more of those articles. Had he ever known any one who confided to him in a moment of expansiveness that he had dated his use of Somebody's soap to an advertisement persistently borne upon him through

the medium of a railway carriage window? No! Would he not have connected that man with that other certifying individual who always appends a name and address singularly obscure and unconvincing, yet who, at some supreme moment, recommends Somebody's pills to a dying friend, — afflicted with a similar address, — which restore him to life and undying obscurity. Yet these pictorial and literary appeals must have a potency independent of the wares they advertise, or they would n't be there.

Perhaps he was the more sensitive to this monotony as he was just then seeking change and novelty in order to write a new story. He was not looking for material, — his subjects were usually the same, — he was merely hoping for that relaxation and diversion which should freshen and fit him for later concentration. Still, he had often heard of the odd circumstances to which his craft were sometimes indebted for suggestion. The invasion of an eccentric-looking individual — probably an innocent tradesman — into a railway carriage had given the hint for "A Night with a Lunatic;" a nervously excited and belated passenger had once unconsciously sat for an escaped forger; the picking up of a forgotten novel in the rack, with passages marked in pencil, had afforded the plot of a love story; or the germ of a romance had been found in an obscure news paragraph which, under less listless moments, would have passed unread. On the other hand, he recalled these inconvenient and inconsistent moments from which the so-called "inspiration" sprang, the utter incongruity of time and place in some brilliant conception, and wondered if sheer vacuity of mind were really so favorable.

Going back to his magazine again, he began to get mildly interested in a story. Turning the page, however, he was confronted by a pictorial advertising leaflet inserted between the pages, yet so artistic in character that it might have been easily mistaken for an illustration of the story he was

reading, and perhaps was not more remote or obscure in reference than many he had known. But the next moment he recognized with despair that it was only a smaller copy of one he had seen on the hoarding at the last station. He threw the leaflet aside, but the flavor of the story was gone. The peerless detergent of the advertisement had erased it from the tablets of his memory. He leaned back in his seat again, and lazily watched the flying suburbs. Here were the usual promising open spaces and patches of green, quickly succeeded again by solid blocks of houses whose rear windows gave directly upon the line, yet seldom showed an inquisitive face — even of a wondering child. It was a strange revelation of the depressing effects of familiarity. Expresses might thunder by, goods trains drag their slow length along, shunting trains pipe all day beneath their windows, but the tenants heeded them not. Here, too, was the junction, with its labyrinthine interlacing of tracks that dazed the tired brain; the overburdened telegraph posts, that looked as if they really could not stand another wire; the long lines of empty, homeless, and deserted trains in sidings that had seen better days; the idle trains, with staring vacant windows, which were eventually seized by a pert engine hissing, "Come along, will you?" and departed with a discontented grunt from every individual carriage coupling; the racing trains, that suddenly appeared parallel with one's carriage windows, begot false hopes of a challenge of speed, and then, without warning, drew contemptuously and superciliously away; the swift eclipse of everything in a tunneled bridge; the long, slithering passage of an "up" express, and then the flash of a station, incoherent and unintelligible with pictorial advertisements again.

He closed his eyes to concentrate his thought, and by degrees a pleasant languor stole over him. The train had by this time attained that rate of speed which gave it a slight swing and roll on curves and switches not unlike the

rocking of a cradle. Once or twice he opened his eyes sleepily upon the waltzing trees in the double planes of distance, and again closed them. Then, in one of these slight oscillations, he felt himself ridiculousy slipping into slumber, and awoke with some indignation. Another station was passed, in which process the pictorial advertisements on the hoardings and the pictures in his lap seemed to have become jumbled up, confused, and to dance before him, and then suddenly and strangely, without warning, the train stopped short — at *another* station. And then he arose, and — what five minutes before he never conceived of doing — gathered his papers and slipped from the carriage to the platform. When I say "he" I mean, of course, the Writer of Stories; yet the man who slipped out was half his age and a different-looking person.

. . . . . .

The change from the motion of the train — for it seemed that he had been traveling several hours — to the firmer platform for a moment bewildered him. The station looked strange, and he fancied it lacked a certain kind of distinctness. But that quality was also noticeable in the porters and loungers on the platform. He thought it singular, until it seemed to him that they were not characteristic, nor in any way important or necessary to the business he had in hand. Then, with an effort, he tried to remember himself and his purpose, and made his way through the station to the open road beyond. A van, bearing the inscription, "Removals to Town and Country," stood before him and blocked his way, but a dogcart was in waiting, and a grizzled groom, who held the reins, touched his hat respectfully. Although still dazed by his journey and uncertain of himself, he seemed to recognize in the man that distinctive character which was wanting in the others. The correctness of his surmise was revealed a few moments later, when, after he had taken his seat beside him, and they

were rattling out of the village street, the man turned towards him and said: —

"Tha 'll know Sir Jarge?"

"I do not," said the young man.

"Ay! but theer 's many as cooms here as doan't, for all they cooms. Tha 'll say it ill becooms mea as war man and boy in Sir Jarge's sarvice for fifty year, to say owt agen him, but I 'm here to do it, or they could n't foolfil their business. Tha wast to ax me questions about Sir Jarge and the Grange, and I wor to answer soa as to make tha think thar was suthing wrong wi' un. Howbut I may save tha time and tell thea downroight that Sir Jarge forged his uncle's will, and so gotten the Grange. That 'ee keeps his niece in mortal fear o' he. That tha 'll be put in haunted chamber wi' a boggle."

"I think," said the young man hesitatingly, "that there must be some mistake. I do not know any Sir George, and I am *not* going to the Grange."

"Eay! Then thee are n't the 'ero sent down from London by the story writer?"

"Not by *that* one," said the young man diffidently.

The old man's face changed. It was no mere figure of speech: it actually was *another* face that looked down upon the traveler.

"Then mayhap your honor will be bespoken at the Angel's Inn," he said, with an entirely distinct and older dialect, "and a finer hostel for a young gentleman of your condition ye 'll not find on this side of Oxford. A fair chamber, looking to the sun; sheets smelling of lavender from Dame Margery's own store, and, for the matter of that, spread by the fair hands of Maudlin, her daughter — the best favored lass that ever danced under a Maypole. Ha! have at ye there, young sir! Not to speak of the October ale of old Gregory, her father — ay, nor the rare Hollands, that never paid excise duties to the king."

"I 'm afraid," said the young traveler timidly, "there 's over a century between us. There 's really some mistake."

"What?" said the groom, "ye are *not* the young spark who is to marry Mistress Amy at the Hall, yet makes a pother and mess of it all by a duel with Sir Roger de Cadgerly, the wicked baronet, for his over-free discourse with our fair Maudlin this very eve? Ye are *not* the traveler whose post-chaise is now at the Falcon? Ye are not he that was bespoken by the story writer in London?"

"I don't think I am," said the young man apologetically. "Indeed, as I am feeling far from well, I think I 'll get out and walk."

He got down — the vehicle and driver vanished in the distance. It did not surprise him. "I must collect my thoughts," he said. He did so. Possibly the collection was not large, for presently he said, with a sigh of relief: —

"I see it all now! My name is Paul Bunker. I am of the young branch of an old Quaker family, rich and respected in the country, and I am on a visit to my ancestral home. But I have lived since a child in America, and am alien to the traditions and customs of the old country, and even of the seat to which my fathers belong. I have brought with me from the far West many peculiarities of speech and thought that may startle my kinsfolk. But I certainly shall not address my uncle as 'Hoss!' nor shall I say 'guess' oftener than is necessary."

Much brightened and refreshed by his settled identity, he had time, as he walked briskly along, to notice the scenery, which was certainly varied and conflicting in character, and quite inconsistent with his preconceived notions of an English landscape. On his right, a lake of the brightest cobalt blue stretched before a many-towered and terraced town, which was relieved by a background of luxuriant foliage and emerald-green mountain; on his left arose a rugged mountain, which he was surprised to see was snow-

capped, albeit a tunnel was observable midway of its height, and a train just issuing from it. Almost regretting that he had not continued on his journey, as he was fully sensible that it was in some way connected with the railway he had quitted, presently his attention was directed to the gateway of a handsome park, whose mansion was faintly seen in the distance. Hurrying towards him, down the avenue of limes, was a strange figure. It was that of a man of middle age, clad in Quaker garb, yet with an extravagance of cut and detail which seemed antiquated even for England. He had evidently seen the young man approaching, and his face was beaming with welcome. If Paul had doubted that it was his uncle, the first words he spoke would have reassured him.

"Welcome to Hawthorn Hall," said the figure, grasping his hand heartily, "but thee will excuse me if I do not tarry with thee long at present, for I am hastening, even now, with some nourishing and sustaining food for Giles Hayward, a farm laborer." He pointed to a package he was carrying. "But thee will find thy cousins Jane and Dorcas Bunker taking tea in the summer-house. Go to them! Nay — positively — I may not linger, but will return to thee quickly." And, to Paul's astonishment, he trotted away on his sturdy, respectable legs, still beaming and carrying his package in his hand.

"Well, I'll be dog-goned! but the old man ain't going to be left, you bet!" he ejaculated, suddenly remembering his dialect. "He'll get there, whether school keeps or not!" Then, reflecting that no one heard him, he added simply, "He certainly was not over civil towards the nephew he has never seen before. And those girls — whom I don't know! How very awkward!"

Nevertheless, he continued his way up the avenue towards the mansion. The park was beautifully kept. Remembering the native wildness and virgin seclusion of the

Western forest, he could not help contrasting it with the conservative gardening of this pretty woodland, every rood of which had been patrolled by keepers and rangers, and preserved and fostered hundreds of years before he was born, until warmed for human occupancy. At times the avenue was crossed by grass drives, where the original woodland had been displaced, not by the exigency of a "clearing" for tillage, as in his own West, but for the leisurely pleasure of the owner. Then, a few hundred yards from the house itself, — a quaint Jacobean mansion, — he came to an open space where the sylvan landscape had yielded to floral cultivation, and so fell upon a charming summer-house, or arbor, embowered with roses. It must have been the one of which his uncle had spoken, for there, to his wondering admiration, sat two little maids before a rustic table, drinking tea demurely, yes, with all the evident delight of a childish escapade from their elders. While in the picturesque quaintness of their attire there was still a formal suggestion of the sect to which their father belonged, their summer frocks — differing in color, yet each of the same subdued tint — were alike in cut and fashion, and short enough to show their dainty feet in prim slippers and silken hose that matched their frocks. As the afternoon sun glanced through the leaves upon their pink cheeks, tied up in quaint hats by ribbons under their chins, they made a charming picture. At least Paul thought so as he advanced towards them, hat in hand. They looked up at his approach, but again cast down their eyes with demure shyness; yet he fancied that they first exchanged glances with each other, full of mischievous intelligence.

"I am your cousin Paul," he said smilingly, "though I am afraid I am introducing myself almost as briefly as your father just now excused himself to me. He told me I would find you here, but he himself was hastening on a Samaritan mission."

"With a box in his hand?" said the girls simultaneously, exchanging glances with each other again.

"With a box containing some restorative, I think," responded Paul, a little wonderingly.

"Restorative! So *that's* what he calls it now, is it?" said one of the girls saucily. "Well, no one knows what 's in the box, though he always carries it with him. Thee never sees him without it" —

"And a roll of paper," suggested the other girl.

"Yes, a roll of paper — but one never knows what it is!" said the first speaker. "It 's very strange. But no matter now, Paul. Welcome to Hawthorn Hall. I am Jane Bunker, and this is Dorcas." She stopped, and then, looking down demurely, added, "Thee may kiss us both, cousin Paul."

The young man did not wait for a second invitation, but gently touched his lips to their soft young cheeks.

"Thee does not speak like an American, Paul. Is thee really and truly one?" continued Jane.

Paul remembered that he had forgotten his dialect, but it was too late now.

"I am really and truly one, and your own cousin, and I hope you will find me a very dear" —

"Oh!" said Dorcas, starting up primly. "You must really allow me to withdraw." To the young man's astonishment, she seized her parasol, and, with a youthful affectation of dignity, glided from the summer-house and was lost among the trees.

"Thy declaration to me was rather sudden," said Jane quietly, in answer to his look of surprise, "and Dorcas is peculiarly sensitive and less like the 'world's people' than I am. And it was just a little cruel, considering that she has loved thee secretly all these years, followed thy fortunes in America with breathless eagerness, thrilled at thy narrow escapes, and wept at thy privations."

"But she has never seen me before!" said the astounded Paul.

"And thee had never seen me before, and yet thee has dared to propose to me five minutes after thee arrived, and in her presence."

"But, my dear girl!" expostulated Paul.

"Stand off!" she said, rapidly opening her parasol and interposing it between them. "Another step nearer — ay, even another word of endearment — and I shall be compelled — nay, forced," she added in a lower voice, "to remove this parasol, lest it should be crushed and ruined!"

"I see," he said gloomily, "you have been reading novels; but so have I, and the same ones! Nevertheless, I intended only to tell you that I hoped you would always find me a kind friend."

She shut her parasol up with a snap. "And I only intended to tell thee that my heart was given to another."

"You *intended* — and now?"

"Is it the 'kind friend' who asks?"

"If it were not?"

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Ah!"

"Oh!"

"But thee loves another?" she said, toying with her cup.

He attempted to toy with his, but broke it. A man lacks delicacy in this kind of persiflage. "You mean I am loved by another," he said, bluntly.

"You dare to say that!" she said, flashing, in spite of her prim demeanor.

"No, but *you* did just now! You said your sister loved me!"

"Did I?" she said dreamily. "Dear! dear! That 's the trouble of trying to talk like Mr. Blank's delightful dialogues. One gets so mixed!"

"Yet you will be a sister to me?" he said. "'T is an old American joke, but 't will serve."

There was a long silence.

"Had thee not better go to sister Dorcas? She is playing with the cows," said Jane plaintively.

"You forget," he returned gravely, "that, on page 27 of the novel we have both read, at this point he is supposed to kiss her."

She had forgotten, but they both remembered in time. At this moment a scream came faintly from the distance. They both started, and rose.

"It is sister Dorcas," said Jane, sitting down again and pouring out another cup of tea. "I have always told her that one of those Swiss cows would hook her."

Paul stared at her with a strange revulsion of feeling. "I could save Dorcas," he muttered to himself, "in less time than it takes to describe." He paused, however, as he reflected that this would depend entirely upon the methods of the writer of this description. "I could rescue her! I have only to take the first clothes-line that I find, and with that knowledge and skill with the lasso which I learned in the wilds of America, I could stop the charge of the most furious ruminant. I will!" and without another word he turned and rushed off in the direction of the sound.

. . . . . .

He had not gone a hundred yards before he paused, a little bewildered. To the left could still be seen the cobalt lake with the terraced background; to the right the rugged mountains. He chose the latter. Luckily for him a cottager's garden lay in his path, and from a line supported by a single pole depended the homely linen of the cottager. To tear these garments from the line was the work of a moment (although it represented the whole week's washing), and hastily coiling the rope dexterously in his hand, he sped onward. Already panting with exertion and ex-

citement, a few roods farther he was confronted with a spectacle that left him breathless.

A woman — young, robust, yet gracefully formed — was running ahead of him, driving before her with an open parasol an animal which he instantly recognized as one of that simple yet treacherous species most feared by the sex — known as the "Moo Cow."

For a moment he was appalled by the spectacle. But it was only for a moment! Recalling his manhood and her weakness, he stopped, and bracing his foot against a stone, with a graceful flourish of his lasso around his head, threw it in the air. It uncoiled slowly, sped forward with unerring precision, and missed! With the single cry of "Saved!" the fair stranger sank fainting in his arms! He held her closely until the color came back to her pale face. Then he quietly disentangled the lasso from his legs.

"Where am I?" she said faintly.

"In the same place," he replied, slowly but firmly. "But," he added, "you have changed!"

She had, indeed, even to her dress. It was now of a vivid brick red, and so much longer in the skirt that it seemed to make her taller. Only her hat remained the same.

"Yes," she said, in a low, reflective voice and a disregard of her previous dialect, as she gazed up in his eyes with an eloquent lucidity, "I have changed, Paul! I felt myself changing at those words you uttered to Jane. There are moments in a woman's life that man knows nothing of; moments bitter and cruel, sweet and merciful, that change her whole being; moments in which the simple girl becomes a worldly woman; moments in which the slow procession of her years is never noted — except by another woman! Moments that change her outlook on the world and her relations to it — and her husband's relations. Moments when the maid becomes a wife, the wife a widow,

the widow a re-married woman, by a simple, swift illumination of the fancy. Moments when, wrought upon by a single word — a look — an emphasis and rising inflection, all logical sequence is cast away, processes are lost — inductions lead nowhere. Moments when the inharmonious becomes harmonious, the indiscreet discreet, the inefficient efficient, and the inevitable evitable. I mean," she corrected herself hurriedly — "You know what I mean! If you have not felt it you have read it!"

"I have," he said thoughtfully. "We have both read it in the same novel. She is a fine writer."

"Ye-e-s." She hesitated with that slight resentment of praise of another woman so delightful in her sex. "But you have forgotten the Moo Cow!" and she pointed to where the distracted animal was careering across the lawn towards the garden.

"You are right," he said, "the incident is not yet closed. Let us pursue it."

They both pursued it. Discarding the useless lasso, he had recourse to a few well-aimed epithets. The infuriated animal swerved and made directly towards a small fountain in the centre of the garden. In attempting to clear it, it fell directly into the deep cup-like basin and remained helplessly fixed, with its fore-legs projecting uneasily beyond the rim.

"Let us leave it there," she said, "and forget it — and all that has gone before. Believe me," she added, with a faint sigh, "it is best. Our paths diverge from this moment. I go to the summer-house, and you go to the Hall, where my father is expecting you." He would have detained her a moment longer, but she glided away and was gone.

Left to himself again, that slight sense of bewilderment which had clouded his mind for the last hour began to clear away; his singular encounter with the girls strangely

enough affected him less strongly than his brief and unsatisfactory interview with his uncle. For, after all, *he* was his host, and upon him depended his stay at Hawthorn Hall. The mysterious and slighting allusions of his cousins to the old man's eccentricities also piqued his curiosity. Why had they sneered at his description of the contents of the package he carried — and what did it really contain! He did not reflect that it was none of his business, — people in his situation seldom do, — and he eagerly hurried towards the Hall. But he found in his preoccupation he had taken the wrong turning in the path, and that he was now close to the wall which bounded and overlooked the highway. Here a singular spectacle presented itself. A cyclist covered with dust was seated in the middle of the road, trying to restore circulation to his bruised and injured leg by chafing it with his hands, while beside him lay his damaged bicycle. He had evidently met with an accident. In an instant Paul had climbed the wall and was at his side.

"Can I offer you any assistance?" he asked eagerly.

"Thanks — no! I 've come a beastly cropper over something or other on this road, and I 'm only bruised, though the machine has suffered worse," replied the stranger, in a fresh, cheery voice. He was a good-looking fellow of about Paul's own age, and the young American's heart went out towards him.

"How did it happen?" asked Paul.

"That 's what puzzles me," said the stranger. "I was getting out of the way of a queer old chap in the road, and I ran over something that seemed only an old scroll of paper; but the shock was so great that I was thrown, and I fancy I was for a few moments unconscious. Yet I cannot see any other obstruction in the road, and there 's only that bit of paper." He pointed to the paper, — a half-crushed roll of ordinary foolscap, showing the mark of the bicycle upon it.

A strange idea came into Paul's mind. He picked up the paper and examined it closely. Besides the mark already indicated, it showed two sharp creases about nine inches long, and another exactly at the point of the impact of the bicycle. Taking a folded two-foot rule from his pocket, he carefully measured these parallel creases and made an exhaustive geometrical calculation with his pencil on the paper. The stranger watched him with awed and admiring interest. Rising, he again carefully examined the road, and was finally rewarded by the discovery of a sharp indentation in the dust, which, on measurement and comparison with the creases in the paper and the calculations he had just made, proved to be identical.

"There was a solid body in that paper," said Paul quietly; "a parallelogram exactly nine inches long and three wide."

"I say! you 're wonderfully clever, don't you know," said the stranger, with unaffected wonder. "I see it all — a brick."

Paul smiled gently and shook his head. "That is the hasty inference of an inexperienced observer. You will observe at the point of impact of your wheel the parallel crease is *curved*, as from the yielding of the resisting substance, and not *broken*, as it would be by the crumbling of a brick."

"I say, you 're awfully detective, don't you know! just like that fellow — what 's his name?" said the stranger admiringly.

The words recalled Paul to himself. Why was he acting like a detective? and what was he seeking to discover? Nevertheless, he felt impelled to continue. "And that queer old chap whom you met — why did n't he help you?"

"Because I passed him before I ran into the — the parallelogram, and I suppose he did n't know what happened behind him."

"Did he have anything in his hand?"

"Can't say."

"And you say you were unconscious afterwards?"

"Yes!"

"Long enough for the culprit to remove the principal evidence of his crime?"

"Come! I say, really you are — you know you are!"

"Have you any secret enemy?"

"No."

"And you don't know Mr. Bunker, the man who owns this vast estate?"

"Not at all. I 'm from Upper Tooting."

"Good afternoon," said Paul abruptly, and turned away.

It struck him afterwards that his action might have seemed uncivil, and even inhuman, to the bruised cyclist, who could hardly walk. But it was getting late, and he was still far from the Hall, which, oddly enough, seemed to be no longer visible from the road. He wandered on for some time, half convinced that he had passed the lodge gates, yet hoping to find some other entrance to the domain. Dusk was falling; the rounded outlines of the park trees beyond the wall were solid masses of shadow. The full moon, presently rising, restored them again to symmetry, and at last he, to his relief, came upon the massive gateway. Two lions ramped in stone on the side pillars. He thought it strange that he had not noticed the gateway on his previous entrance, but he remembered that he was fully preoccupied with the advancing figure of his uncle. In a few minutes the Hall itself appeared, and here again he was surprised that he had overlooked before its noble proportions and picturesque outline. Its broad terraces, dazzlingly white in the moonlight; its long line of mullioned windows, suffused with a warm red glow from within, made it look like part of a wintry landscape — and suggested a Christmas card. The venerable ivy that hid the ravages

time had made in its walls looked like black carving. His heart swelled with strange emotions as he gazed at his ancestral hall. How many of his blood had lived and died there; how many had gone forth from that great porch to distant lands! He tried to think of his father — a little child — peeping between the balustrades of that terrace. He tried to think of it, and perhaps would have succeeded had it not occurred to him that it was a known fact that his uncle had bought the estate and house of an impoverished nobleman only the year before. Yet — he could not tell why — he seemed to feel higher and nobler for that trial.

The terrace was deserted, and so quiet that as he ascended to it his footsteps seemed to echo from the walls. When he reached the portals, the great oaken door swung noiselessly on its hinges — opened by some unseen but waiting servitor — and admitted him to a lofty hall, dark with hangings and family portraits, but warmed by a red carpet the whole length of its stone floor. For a moment he waited for the servant to show him to the drawing-room or his uncle's study. But no one appeared. Believing this to be a part of the characteristic simplicity of the Quaker household, he boldly entered the first door, and found himself in a brilliantly lit and perfectly empty drawing-room. The same experience met him with the other rooms on that floor, — the dining-room displaying an already set, exquisitely furnished and decorated table, with chairs for twenty guests! He mechanically ascended the wide oaken staircase that led to the corridor of bedrooms above a central salon. Here he found only the same solitude. Bedroom doors yielded to his touch, only to show the same brilliantly lit vacancy. He presently came upon one room which seemed to give unmistakable signs of *his own* occupancy. Surely there stood his own dressing-case on the table! and his own evening clothes carefully laid out on another, as if

fresh from a valet's hands. He stepped hastily into the corridor — there was no one there; he rang the bell — there was no response! But he noticed that there was a jug of hot water in his basin, and he began dressing mechanically.

There was little doubt that he was in a haunted house, but this did not particularly disturb him. Indeed, he found himself wondering if it could be logically called a haunted house — unless he himself was haunting it, for there seemed to be no other there. Perhaps the apparitions would come later, when he was dressed. Clearly it was not his uncle's house — and yet, as he had never been inside his uncle's house, he reflected that he ought not to be positive.

He finished dressing and sat down in an armchair with a kind of thoughtful expectancy. But presently his curiosity became impatient of the silence and mystery, and he ventured once more to explore the house. Opening his bedroom door, he found himself again upon the deserted corridor, but this time he could distinctly hear a buzz of voices from the drawing-room below. Assured that he was near a solution of the mystery, he rapidly descended the broad staircase and made his way to the open door of the drawing-room. But although the sound of voices increased as he advanced, when he entered the room, to his utter astonishment, it was as empty as before.

Yet, in spite of his bewilderment and confusion, he was able to follow one of the voices, which, in its peculiar distinctness and half-perfunctory tone, he concluded must belong to the host of the invisible assembly.

"Ah," said the voice, greeting some unseen visitor, "so glad you have come! Afraid your engagements just now would keep you away." Then the voice dropped to a lower and more confidential tone. "You must take down Lady Dartman, but you will have Miss Morecamp — a clever girl — on the other side of you. Ah, Sir George! So good of

you to come. All well at the Priory? So glad to hear it." (Lower and more confidentially.) "You know Mrs. Monkston. You 'll sit by her. A little cut up by her husband losing his seat. Try to amuse her."

Emboldened by desperation, Paul turned in the direction of the voice. "I am Paul Bunker," he said hesitatingly. "I 'm afraid you 'll think me intrusive, but I was looking for my uncle, and" —

"Intrusive, my dear boy! The son of my near neighbor in the country intrusive? Really, now, I like that! Grace" (the voice turned in another direction), "here is the American nephew of our neighbor Bunker at Widdlestone, who thinks he is 'a stranger.'"

"We all knew of your expected arrival at Widdlestone — it was so good of you to waive ceremony and join us," said a well-bred feminine voice, which Paul at once assumed to belong to the hostess. "But I must find some one for your dinner partner. Mary" (here her voice was likewise turned away), "this is Mr. Bunker, the nephew of an old friend and neighbor in Upshire;" (the voice again turned to him) "you will take Miss Morecamp in. My dear" (once again averted), "I must find some one else to console poor dear Lord Billingtree with." Here the hostess's voice was drowned by fresh arrivals.

Bewildered and confused as he was, standing in this empty desert of a drawing-room, yet encompassed on every side by human voices, so marvelous was the power of suggestion, he seemed to almost feel the impact of the invisible crowd. He was trying desperately to realize his situation when a singularly fascinating voice at his elbow unexpectedly assisted him. It was evidently his dinner partner.

"I suppose you must be tired after your journey. When did you arrive?"

"Only a few hours ago," said Paul.

"And I dare say you have n't slept since you arrived.

One does n't on the passage, you know; the twenty hours pass so quickly, and the experience is so exciting — to *us* at least. But I suppose as an American you are used to it."

Paul gasped. He had passively accepted the bodiless conversation, because it was at least intelligible! But *now!* Was he going mad?

She evidently noticed his silence. "Never mind," she continued, "you can tell me all about it at dinner. Do you know I always think that this sort of thing — what we 're doing now, — this ridiculous formality of reception, — which I suppose is after all only a concession to our English force of habit — is absurd! We ought to pass, as it were, directly from our houses to the dinner-table. It saves time."

"Yes — no — that is — I 'm afraid I don't follow you," stammered Paul.

There was a slight pout in her voice as she replied: "No matter now — we must follow them — for our host is moving off with Lady Billingtree, and it 's our turn now."

So great was the illusion that he found himself mechanically offering his arm as he moved through the empty room towards the door. Then he descended the staircase without another word, preceded, however, by the sound of his host's voice. Following this as a blind man might, he entered the dining-room, which to his discomfiture was as empty as the salon above. Still following the host's voice, he dropped into a chair before the empty table, wondering what variation of the Barmecide feast was in store for him. Yet the hum of voices from the vacant chairs around the board so strongly impressed him that he could almost believe that he was actually at dinner.

"Are you seated?" asked the charming voice at his side.

"Yes," a little wonderingly, as his was the only seat visibly occupied.

"I am so glad that this silly ceremony is over. By the way, where are you?"

Paul would have liked to answer, "Lord only knows!" but he reflected that it might not sound polite. "Where am I?" he feebly repeated.

"Yes; where are you dining?"

It seemed a cool question under the circumstances, but he answered promptly, —

"With you."

"Of course," said the charming voice; "but where are you eating your dinner?"

Considering that he was not eating anything, Paul thought this cooler still. But he answered briefly, "In Upshire."

"Oh! At your uncle's?"

"No," said Paul bluntly; "in the next house."

"Why, that 's Sir William's — our host's — and he and his family are here in London. You are joking."

"Listen!" said Paul desperately. Then in a voice unconsciously lowered he hurriedly told her where he was — how he came there — the empty house — the viewless company! To his surprise the only response was a musical little laugh. But the next moment her voice rose higher, with an unmistakable concern in it, apparently addressing their invisible host.

"Oh, Sir William, only think how dreadful! Here 's poor Mr. Bunker, alone in an empty house, which he has mistaken for his uncle's — and without any dinner!"

"Really; dear, dear! · How provoking! But how does he happen to be *with us?* James, how is this?"

"If you please, Sir William," said a servant's respectful voice, "Widdlestone is in the circuit and is switched on with the others. We heard that a gentleman's luggage had arrived at Widdlestone, and we telegraphed for the rooms to be made ready, thinking we 'd have her ladyship's orders later."

A single gleam of intelligence flashed upon Paul. His luggage — yes, had been sent from the station to the wrong house, and he had unwittingly followed. But these voices! whence did they come! And where was the actual dinner at which his host was presiding? It clearly was not at this empty table.

"See that he has everything he wants at once," said Sir William; "there must be some one there." Then his voice turned in the direction of Paul again, and he said laughingly, "Possess your soul and appetite in patience for a moment, Mr. Bunker; you will be only a course behind us. But we are lucky in having your company — even at your own discomfort."

Still more bewildered, Paul turned to his invisible partner. "May I ask where *you* are dining?"

"Certainly; at home in Curzon Street," returned the pretty voice. "It was raining so, I did not go out."

"And — Lord Billington?" faltered Paul.

"Oh, he 's in Scotland — at his own place."

"Then, in fact, nobody is dining here at all," said Paul desperately.

There was a slight pause, and then the voice responded, with a touch of startled suggestion in it: "Good heavens, Mr. Bunker! Is it possible you don't know we 're dining by telephone?"

"By what?"

"Telephone. Yes. We 're a telephonic dinner-party. We are dining in our own houses; but, being all friends, we 're switched on to each other, and converse exactly as we would at table. It saves a great trouble and expense, for any one of us can give the party, and the poorest can equal the most extravagant. People who are obliged to diet can partake of their own slops at home, and yet mingle with the gourmets without awkwardness or the necessity of apology. We are spared the spectacle, at least, of those

who eat and drink too much. We can switch off a bore at once. We can retire when we are fatigued, without leaving a blank space before the others. And all this without saying anything of the higher spiritual and intellectual effect — freed from material grossness of appetite and show — which the dinner party thus attains. But you are surely joking! You, an American, and not know it! Why, it comes from Boston. Have n't you read that book, 'Jumping a Century'? It 's by an American."

A strange illumination came upon Paul. Where had he heard something like this before? But at the same moment his thoughts were diverted by the material entrance of a footman, bearing a silver salver with his dinner. It was part of his singular experience that the visible entrance of this real, commonplace mortal — the only one he had seen — in the midst of this voiceless solitude was distinctly unreal, and had all the effect of an apparition. He distrusted it and the dishes before him. But his lively partner's voice was now addressing an unseen occupant of the next chair. Had she got tired of his ignorance, or was it feminine tact to enable him to eat something? He accepted the latter hypothesis, and tried to eat. But he felt himself following the fascinating voice in all the charm of its youthful and spiritual inflections. Taking advantage of its momentary silence, he said gently, —

"I confess my ignorance, and am willing to admit all you claim for this wonderful invention. But do you think it compensates for the loss of the individual person? Take my own case — if you will not think me personal. I have never had the pleasure of seeing you; do you believe that I am content with only that suggestion of your personality which the satisfaction of hearing your voice affords me?"

There was a pause, and then a very mischievous ring in the voice that replied: "It certainly is a personal question,

and it is another blessing of this invention that you 'll never know whether I am blushing or not; but I forgive you, for *I* never before spoke to any one I had never seen — and I suppose it 's confusion. But do you really think you would know me — the *real* one — any better? It is the real person who thinks and speaks, not the outward semblance that we see, which very often unfairly either attracts or repels us. We can always *show* ourselves at our best, but we must, at last, reveal our true colors through our thoughts and speech. Is n't it better to begin with the real thing first?"

"I hope, at least, to have the privilege of judging by myself," said Paul gallantly. "You will not be so cruel as not to let me see you elsewhere, otherwise I shall feel as if I were in some dream, and will certainly be opposed to your preference for realities."

"I am not certain if the dream would not be more interesting to you," said the voice laughingly. "But I think your hostess is already saying 'good-by.' You know everybody goes at once at this kind of party; the ladies don't retire first, and the gentlemen join them afterwards. In another moment we 'll *all* be switched off; but Sir William wants me to tell you that his coachman will drive you to your uncle's, unless you prefer to try and make yourself comfortable for the night here. Good-by!"

The voices around him seemed to grow fainter, and then utterly cease. The lights suddenly leaped up, went out, and left him in complete darkness. He attempted to rise, but in doing so overset the dishes before him, which slid to the floor. A cold air seemed to blow across his feet.

The "good-by" was still ringing in his ears as he straightened himself to find he was in his railway carriage, whose door had just been opened for a young lady who was entering the compartment from a wayside station. "Good-by," she repeated to the friend who was seeing her off.

The Writer of Stories hurriedly straightened himself, gathered up the magazines and papers that had fallen from his lap, and glanced at the station walls. The old illustrations glanced back at him! He looked at his watch; he had been asleep just ten minutes.

A BUCKEYE HOLLOW INHERITANCE

THE four men on the "Zip Coon" Ledge had not got fairly settled to their morning's work. There was the usual lingering hesitation which is apt to attend the taking-up of any regular or monotonous performance, shown in this instance in the prolonged scrutiny of a pick's point, the solemn selection of a shovel, or the "hefting" or weighing of a tapping-iron or drill. One member, becoming interested in a funny paragraph he found in the scrap of newspaper wrapped around his noonday cheese, shamelessly sat down to finish it, regardless of the prospecting pan thrown at him by another. They had taken up their daily routine of mining life like schoolboys at their tasks.

"Hello!" said Ned Wyngate, joyously recognizing a possible further interruption. "Blamed if the Express rider ain't comin' here!"

He was shading his eyes with his hand as he gazed over the broad sun-baked expanse of broken "flat" between them and the high-road. They all looked up, and saw the figure of a mounted man, with a courier's bag thrown over his shoulder, galloping towards them. It was really an event, as their letters were usually left at the grocery at the crossroads.

"I knew something was goin' to happen," said Wyngate. "I did n't feel a bit like work this morning."

Here one of their number ran off to meet the advancing horseman. They watched him until they saw the latter rein up, and hand a brown envelope to their messenger, who ran breathlessly back with it to the Ledge as the horseman galloped away again.

"A telegraph for Jackson Wells," he said, handing it to the young man who had been reading the scrap of paper.

There was a dead silence. Telegrams were expensive rarities in those days, especially with the youthful Bohemian miners of the Zip Coon Ledge. They were burning with curiosity, yet a singular thing happened. Accustomed as they had been to a life of brotherly familiarity and unceremoniousness, this portentous message from the outside world of civilization recalled their old formal politeness. They looked steadily away from the receiver of the telegram, and he on his part stammered an apologetic "Excuse me, boys," as he broke the envelope.

There was another pause, which seemed to be interminable to the waiting partners. Then the voice of Wells, in quite natural tones, said, "By gum! that 's funny! Read that, Dexter, — read it out loud."

Dexter Rice, the foreman, took the proffered telegram from Wells's hand, and read as follows: —

Your uncle, Quincy Wells, died yesterday, leaving you sole heir. Will attend you to-morrow for instructions.

BAKER AND TWIGGS,
Attorneys, Sacramento.

The three miners' faces lightened and turned joyously to Wells; but *his* face looked puzzled.

"May we congratulate you, Mr. Wells?" said Wyngate, with affected politeness; "or possibly your uncle may have been English, and a title goes with the 'prop,' and you may be Lord Wells, or Very Wells — at least."

But here Jackson Wells's youthful face lost its perplexity, and he began to laugh long and silently to himself. This was protracted to such an extent that Dexter asserted himself, — as foreman and senior partner.

"Look here, Jack! don't sit there cackling like a chuckle-headed magpie, if you *are* the heir."

"I — can't — help it," gasped Jackson. "I am the heir — but you see, boys, there *ain't any property.*"

"What do you mean? Is all that a sell?" demanded Rice.

"Not much! Telegraph 's too expensive for that sort o' feelin'. You see, boys, I 've got an Uncle Quincy, though I don't know him much, and he *may* be dead. But his whole fixin's consisted of a claim the size of ours, and played out long ago; a ramshackle lot o' sheds called a cottage, and a kind of market garden of about three acres, where he reared and sold vegetables. He was always poor, and as for calling it 'property,' and *me* the 'heir' — good Lord!"

"A miser, as sure as you 're born!" said Wyngate, with optimistic decision. "That 's always the way. You 'll find every crack of that blessed old shed stuck full of greenbacks and certificates of deposit, and lots of gold dust and coin buried all over that cow patch! And of course no one suspected it! And of course he lived alone, and never let any one get into his house — and nearly starved himself! Lord love you! There 's hundreds of such cases. The world is full of 'em!"

"That 's so," chimed in Pulaski Briggs, the fourth partner, "and I tell you what, Jacksey, we 'll come over with you the day you take possession, and just 'prospect' the whole blamed shanty, pigsties, and potato patch, for fun — and won't charge you anything."

For a moment Jackson's face had really brightened under the infection of enthusiasm, but it presently settled into perplexity again.

"No! You bet the boys around Buckeye Hollow would have spotted anything like that long ago."

"Buckeye Hollow!" repeated Rice and his partners.

"Yes! Buckeye Hollow, that 's the place; not twenty miles from here, and a God-forsaken hole, as you know."

A cloud had settled on Zip Coon Ledge. They knew of Buckeye Hollow, and it was evident that no good had ever yet come out of that Nazareth.

"There 's no use of talking now," said Rice conclusively. "You 'll draw it all from that lawyer shark who 's coming here to-morrow, and you can bet your life he would n't have taken this trouble if there was n't suthin' in it. Anyhow we'll knock off work now and call it half a day, in honor of our distinguished young friend's accession to his baronial estates of Buckeye Hollow. We 'll just toddle down to Tomlinson's at the crossroads, and have a nip and a quiet game of old sledge at Jacksey's expense. I reckon the estate 's good for *that*," he added, with severe gravity. "And, speaking as a fa'r-minded man and the president of this yer Company, if Jackson would occasionally take out and air that telegraphic dispatch of his while we 're at Tomlinson's, it might do something for that Company's credit, with Tomlinson! We 're wantin' some new blastin' plant bad!"

Oddly enough the telegram — accidentally shown at Tomlinson's — produced a gratifying effect, and the Zip Coon Ledge materially advanced in public estimation. With this possible infusion of new capital into its resources, the Company was beset by offers of machinery and goods; and it was deemed expedient by the sapient Rice, that to prevent the dissemination of any more accurate information regarding Jackson's property the next day, the lawyer should be met at the stage office by one of the members, and conveyed secretly past Tomlinson's to the Ledge.

"I 'd let you go," he said to Jackson, "only it won't do for that d —— d skunk of a lawyer to think you 're too anxious—*sabe?* We want to rub into him that we are in the habit out yer of havin' things left to us, and a fortin' more or less, falling into us now and then, ain't nothin' alongside of the Zip Coon claim. It won't hurt ye to keep

up a big bluff on that hand of yours. Nobody would dare to 'call' you."

Indeed this idea was carried out with such elaboration the next day that Mr. Twiggs, the attorney, was considerably impressed both by the conduct of his guide, who (although burning with curiosity) expressed absolute indifference regarding Jackson Wells's inheritance, and the calmness of Jackson himself, who had to be ostentatiously called from his work on the Ledge to meet him, and who even gave him an audience in the hearing of his partners. Forced into an apologetic attitude, he expressed his regret at being obliged to bother Mr. Wells with an affair of such secondary importance, but he was obliged to carry out the formalities of the law.

"What do you suppose the estate is worth?" asked Wells carelessly.

"I should not think that the house, the claim, and the land would bring more than fifteen hundred dollars," replied Twiggs submissively.

To the impecunious owners of Zip Coon Ledge it seemed a large sum, but they did not show it.

"You see," continued Mr. Twiggs, "it 's really a case of 'willing away' property from its obvious or direct inheritors, instead of a beneficial grant. I take it that you and your uncle were not particularly intimate, — at least, so I gathered when I made the will, — and his simple object was to disinherit his only daughter, with whom he had had some quarrel, and who had left him to live with his late wife's brother, Mr. Morley Brown, who is quite wealthy and residing in the same township. Perhaps you remember the young lady?"

Jackson Wells had a dim recollection of this cousin, a hateful, red-haired schoolgirl, and an equally unpleasant memory of this other uncle, who was purse-proud and had never taken any notice of him. He answered affirmatively.

"There may be some attempt to contest the will," continued Mr. Twiggs, "as the disinheriting of an only child and a daughter offends the sentiment of the people and of judges and jury, and the law makes such a will invalid, unless a reason is given. Fortunately your uncle has placed his reasons on record. I have a copy of the will here, and can show you the clause." He took it from his pocket, and read as follows: "'I exclude my daughter, Jocelinda Wells, from any benefit or provision of this my will and testament, for the reason that she has voluntarily abandoned her father's roof for the house of her mother's brother, Morley Brown; has preferred the fleshpots of Egypt to the virtuous frugalities of her own home, and has discarded the humble friends of her youth, and the associates of her father, for the meretricious and slavish sympathy of wealth and position. In lieu thereof and as compensation therefor, I do hereby give and bequeath to her my full and free permission to gratify her frequently expressed wish of another guardian in place of myself, and to become the adopted daughter of the said Morley Brown, with the privilege of assuming the name of Brown as aforesaid.' You see," he continued, "as the young lady's present position is a better one than it would be if she were in her father's house, and was evidently a compromise, the sentimental consideration of her being left homeless and penniless falls to the ground. However, as the inheritance is small, and might be of little account to you, if you choose to waive it, I dare say we may make some arrangement."

This was an utterly unexpected idea to the Zip Coon Company, and Jackson Wells was for a moment silent. But Dexter Rice was equal to the emergency, and turned to the astonished lawyer with severe dignity.

"You 'll excuse me for interferin', but, as the senior partner of this yer Ledge, and Jackson Wells yer bein' a most important member, what affects his usefulness on this

claim affects us. And we propose to carry out this yer will, with all its dips and spurs and angles!"

As the surprised Twiggs turned from one to the other, Rice continued, "Ez far as we kin understand this little game, it 's the just punishment of a high-flying girl as breaks her pore old father's heart, and the re-ward of a young feller ez has bin to our knowledge ez devoted a nephew as they make 'em. Time and time again, sittin' around our camp fire at night, we 've heard Jacksey say, — kinder to himself, and kinder to us, — 'Now I wonder what 's gone o' old uncle Quincy;' and he never sat down to a square meal, or ever rose from a square game, but what he allus said, 'If old uncle Quince was only here now, boys, I 'd die happy.' I leave it to you, gentlemen, if that was n't Jackson Wells's gait all the time?"

There was a prolonged murmur of assent, and an affecting corroboration from Ned Wyngate of "That was him; that was Jacksey all the time!"

"Indeed, indeed," said the lawyer nervously. "I had quite the idea that there was very little fondness" —

"Not on your side — not on your side," said Rice quickly. "Uncle Quincy may not have anted up in this matter o' feelin', nor seen his nephew's rise. You know how it is yourself in these things — being a lawyer and a fa'r-minded man — it 's all on one side, ginerally! There 's always one who loves and sacrifices, and all that, and there 's always one who rakes in the pot! That 's the way o' the world; and that 's why," continued Rice, abandoning his slightly philosophical attitude, and laying his hand tenderly, and yet with a singularly significant grip, on Wells's arm, "we say to him, 'Hang on to that will, and uncle Quincy's memory.' And we hev to say it. For he 's that tender-hearted and keerless of money — having his own share in this Ledge — that ef that girl came whimperin' to him he 'd let her take the 'prop' and let the hull

thing slide! And then he 'd remember that he had rewarded that gal that broke the old man's heart, and that would upset him again in his work. And there, you see, is just where *we* come in! And we say, 'Hang on to that will like grim death!'"

The lawyer looked curiously at Rice and his companions, and then turned to Wells. "Nevertheless, I must look to you for instructions," he said dryly.

But by this time Jackson Wells, although really dubious about supplanting the orphan, had gathered the sense of his partners, and said with a frank show of decision, "I think I must stand by the will."

"Then I 'll have it proved," said Twiggs rising. "In the meantime, if there is any talk of contesting" —

"If there is, you might say," suggested Wyngate, who felt he had not had a fair show in the little comedy, — "ye might say to that old skeesicks of a wife's brother, if he wants to nipple in, that there are four men on the Ledge — and four revolvers! We are gin'rally fa'r-minded, peaceful men, but when an old man's heart is broken, and his gray hairs brought down in sorrow to the grave, so to speak, we 're bound to attend the funeral — *sabe?*"

When Mr. Twiggs had departed again, accompanied by a partner to guide him past the dangerous shoals of Tomlinson's grocery, Rice clapped his hand on Wells's shoulder. "If it had n't been for me, sonny, that shark would have landed you into some compromise with that red-haired gal! I saw you weakenin', and then I chipped in. I may have piled up the agony a little on your love for old Quince, but if you are n't an ungrateful cub, that 's how you ought to hev been feelin', anyhow!"

Nevertheless, the youthful Wells, although touched by his elder partner's loyalty, and convinced of his own disinterestedness, felt a painful sense of lost chivalrous opportunity.

. . . . . .

On mature consideration it was finally settled that Jackson Wells should make his preliminary examination of his inheritance alone, as it might seem inconsistent with the previous indifferent attitude of his partners if they accompanied him. But he was implored to yield to no blandishments of the enemy, and to even make his visit a secret.

He went. The familiar flower-spiked trees which had given their name to Buckeye Hollow had never yielded entirely to improvements and the incursions of mining enterprise, and many of them had even survived the disused ditches, the scarred flats, the discarded levels, ruined flumes, and roofless cabins of the earlier occupation, so that when Jackson Wells entered the wide, straggling street of Buckeye, that summer morning was filled with the radiance of its blossoms and fragrant with their incense. His first visit there, ten years ago, had been a purely perfunctory and hasty one, yet he remembered the ostentatious hotel, built in the "flush time" of its prosperity, and already in a green premature decay; he recalled the Express Office and Town Hall, also passing away in a kind of similar green deliquescence; the little zinc church, now overgrown with fern and brambles, and the two or three fine substantial houses in the outskirts, which seemed to have sucked the vitality of the little settlement. One of these — he had been told — was the property of his rich and wicked maternal uncle, the hated appropriator of his red-headed cousin's affections. He recalled his brief visit to the departed testator's claim and market garden, and his by no means favorable impression of the lonely, crabbed old man, as well as his relief that his objectionable cousin, whom he had not seen since he was a boy, was then absent at the rival uncle's. He made his way across the road to a sunny slope where the market garden of three acres seemed to roll like a river of green rapids to a little "run" or brook, which, even in the dry season, showed a trickling rill.

But here he was struck by a singular circumstance. The garden rested in a rich, alluvial soil, and under the quickening Californian sky had developed far beyond the ability of its late cultivator to restrain or keep it in order. Everything had grown luxuriantly, and in monstrous size and profusion. The garden had even trespassed its bounds, and impinged upon the open road, the deserted claims, and the ruins of the past. Stimulated by the little cultivation Quincy Wells had found time to give it, it had leaped its three acres and rioted through the Hollow. There were scarlet runners crossing the abandoned sluices, peas climbing the court-house wall, strawberries matting the trail, while the seeds and pollen of its few homely Eastern flowers had been blown far and wide through the woods. By a grim satire, Nature seemed to have been the only thing that still prospered in that settlement of man.

The cabin itself, built of unpainted boards, consisted of a sitting-room, dining-room, kitchen, and two bedrooms, all plainly furnished, although one of the bedrooms was better ordered, and displayed certain signs of feminine decoration, which made Jackson believe it had been his cousin's room. Luckily, the slight, temporary structure bore no deep traces of its previous occupancy to disturb him with its memories, and for the same reason it gained in cleanliness and freshness. The dry, desiccating summer wind that blew through it had carried away both the odors and the sense of domesticity; even the *adobe* hearth had no fireside tales to tell, — its very ashes had been scattered by the winds; and the gravestone of its dead owner on the hill was no more flavorless of his personality than was this plain house in which he had lived and died. The excessive vegetation produced by the stirred-up soil had covered and hidden the empty tin cans, broken boxes, and fragments of clothing which usually heaped and littered the tent-pegs of the pioneer. Nature's own profusion had thrust them into obscurity.

Jackson Wells smiled as he recalled his sanguine partner's idea of a treasure-trove concealed and stuffed in the crevices of this tenement, already so palpably picked clean by those wholesome scavengers of California, the dry air and burning sun. Yet he was not displeased at this obliteration of a previous tenancy; there was the better chance for him to originate something. He whistled hopefully as he lounged, with his hands in his pockets, towards the only fence and gate that gave upon the road. Something stuck up on the gate-post attracted his attention. It was a sheet of paper bearing the inscription in a large hand: "Notice to trespassers. Look out for the Orphan Robber!" A plain signboard in faded black letters on the gate, which had borne the legend: "Quincy Wells, Dealer in Fruit and Vegetables," had been rudely altered in chalk to read: "Jackson Wells, Double Dealer in Wills and Codicils," and the intimation "Bouquets sold here" had been changed to "Bequests stole here." For an instant the simple-minded Jackson failed to discover any significance of this outrage, which seemed to him to be merely the wanton mischief of a schoolboy. But a sudden recollection of the lawyer's caution sent the blood to his cheeks and kindled his indignation. He tore down the paper and rubbed out the chalk interpolation — and then laughed at his own anger. Nevertheless, he would not have liked his belligerent partners to see it.

A little curious to know the extent of this feeling, he entered one of the shops, and by one or two questions which judiciously betrayed his ownership of the property, he elicited only a tradesman's interest in a possible future customer, and the ordinary curiosity about a stranger. The barkeeper of the hotel was civil, but brief and gloomy. He had heard the property was "willed away" on account of some family quarrel which "war n't none of his." Mr. Wells would find Buckeye Hollow a mighty dull place after

the mines. It was played out, sucked dry by two or three big mine owners who were trying to "freeze out" the other settlers, so as they might get the place to themselves and "boom it." Brown, who had the big house over the hill, was the head devil of the gang! Wells felt his indignation kindle anew. And this girl that he had ousted was Brown's friend. Was it possible that she was a party to Brown's designs to get this three acres with the other lands? If so, his long-suffering uncle was only just in his revenge.

He put all this diffidently before his partners on his return, and was a little startled at their adopting it with sanguine ferocity. They hoped that he would put an end to his thoughts of backing out of it. Such a course now would be dishonorable to his uncle's memory. It was clearly his duty to resist these blasted satraps of capitalists; he was providentially selected for the purpose — a village Hampden to withstand the tyrant. "And I reckon that shark of a lawyer knew all about it when he was gettin' off that 'purp stuff' about people's sympathies with the girl," said Rice belligerently. "Contest the will, would he? Why, if we caught that Brown with a finger in the pie we 'd just whip up the boys on this Ledge and lynch him. You hang on to that three acres and the garden patch of your forefathers, sonny, and we 'll see you through!"

Nevertheless it was with some misgivings that Wells consented that his three partners should actually accompany him and see him put in peaceable possession of his inheritance. His instinct told him that there would be no contest of the will, and still less any opposition on the part of the objectionable relative, Brown. When the wagon which contained his personal effects and the few articles of furniture necessary for his occupancy of the cabin arrived, the exaggerated swagger which his companions had put on in their passage through the settlement gave way to a pastoral indolence, equally half real, half affected. Lying on their

backs under a buckeye, they permitted Rice to voice the general sentiment. "There 's a suthin' soothin' and dreamy in this kind o' life, Jacksey, and we 'll make a point of comin' here for a couple of days every two weeks to lend you a hand; it will be a mighty good change from our nigger work on the claim."

In spite of this assurance, and the fact that they had voluntarily come to help him put the place in order, they did very little beyond lending a cheering expression of unqualified praise and unstinted advice. At the end of four hours' weeding and trimming the boundaries of the garden, they unanimously gave their opinion that it would be more systematic for him to employ Chinese labor at once.

"You see," said Ned Wyngate, "the Chinese naturally take to this kind o' business. Why, you can't take up a china plate or saucer but you see 'em pictured there working at jobs like this, and they kin live on green things and rice that cost nothin', and 'chickens. You 'll keep chickens, of course."

Jackson thought that his hands would be full enough with the garden, but he meekly assented.

"I 'll get a pair — you only want two to begin with," continued Wyngate cheerfully, "and in a month or two you 've got all you want, and eggs enough for market. On second thoughts, I don't know whether you had n't better begin with eggs first. That is, you borry some eggs from one man and a hen from another. Then you set 'em, and when the chickens are hatched out you just return the hen to the second man, and the eggs, when your chickens begin to lay, to the first man, and you 've got your chickens for nothing — and there you are."

This ingenious proposition, which was delivered on the last slope of the domain, where the partners were lying exhausted from their work, was broken in upon by the appearance of a small boy, barefooted, sunburnt, and tow-

headed, who, after a moment's hurried scrutiny of the group, threw a letter with unerring precision into the lap of Jackson Wells, and then fled precipitately. Jackson instinctively suspected he was connected with the outrage on his fence and gate-post, but as he had avoided telling his partners of the incident, fearing to increase their belligerent attitude, he felt now an awkward consciousness mingled with his indignation as he broke the seal and read as follows: —

SIR, — This is to inform you that although you have got hold of the property by underhanded and sneaking ways, you ain't no right to touch or lay your vile hands on the Cherokee Rose alongside the house, nor on the Giant of Battles, nor on the Maiden's Pride by the gate — the same being the property of Miss Jocelinda Wells, and planted by her, under the penalty of the Law. And if you, or any of your gang of ruffians, touches it or them, or any thereof, or don't deliver it up when called for in good order, you will be persecuted by them.

AVENGER.

It is to be feared that Jackson would have suppressed this also, but the keen eyes of his partners, excited by the abruptness of the messenger, were upon him. He smiled feebly, and laid the letter before them. But he was unprepared for their exaggerated indignation, and with difficulty restrained them from dashing off in the direction of the vanished herald. "And what could you do?" he said. "The boy's only a messenger."

"I 'll get at that d——d skunk Brown, who 's back of him," said Dexter Rice.

"And what then?" persisted Jackson, with a certain show of independence. "If this stuff belongs to the girl, I 'm not certain I shan't give them up without any fuss.

Lord! I want nothing but what the old man left me — and certainly nothing of *hers.*"

Here Ned Wyngate was heard to murmur that Jackson was one of those men who would lie down and let coyotes crawl over him if they first presented a girl's visiting card, but he was stopped by Rice demanding paper and pencil. The former being torn from a memorandum book, and a stub of the latter produced from another pocket, he wrote as follows: —

SIR, — In reply to the hogwash you have kindly exuded in your letter of to-day, I have to inform you that you can have what you ask for Miss Wells, and perhaps a trifle on your own account, by calling this afternoon on — Yours truly —

"Now sign it," continued Rice, handing him the pencil.

"But this will look as if we were angry and wanted to keep the plants," protested Wells.

"Never you mind, sonny, but sign! Leave the rest to your partners, and when you lay your head on your pillow to-night return thanks to an overruling Providence for providing you with the right gang of ruffians to look after you!"

Wells signed reluctantly, and Wyngate offered to find a Chinaman in the gulch who would take the missive. "And being a Chinaman, Brown can do any cussin' or buck talk *through* him!" he added.

The afternoon wore on; the tall Douglas pines near the water pools wheeled their long shadows round and halfway up the slope, and the sun began to peer into the faces of the reclining men. Subtle odors of mint and southernwood, stragglers from the garden, bruised by their limbs, replaced the fumes of their smoked-out pipes, and the hammers of the woodpeckers were busy in the grove as they lay

lazily nibbling the fragrant leaves like peaceful ruminants. Then came the sound of approaching wheels along the invisible highway beyond the buckeyes, and then a halt and silence. Rice rose slowly, bright pin points in the pupils of his gray eyes.

"Bringin' a wagon with him to tote the hull shanty away," suggested Wyngate.

"Or fetched his own ambulance," said Briggs.

Nevertheless, after a pause, the wheels presently rolled away again.

"We 'd better go and meet him at the gate," said Rice, hitching his revolver holster nearer his hip. "That wagon stopped long enough to put down three or four men."

They walked leisurely but silently to the gate. It is probable that none of them believed in a serious collision, but now the prospect had enough possibility in it to quicken their pulses. They reached the gate. But it was still closed; the road beyond it empty.

"Mebbe they 've sneaked round to the cabin," said Briggs, "and are holdin' it inside."

They were turning quickly in that direction, when Wyngate said, "Hush! — some one 's there in the brush under the buckeyes."

They listened; there was a faint rustling in the shadows.

"Come out o' that, Brown — into the open. Don't be shy," called out Rice in cheerful irony. "We 're waitin' for ye."

But Briggs, who was nearest the wood, here suddenly uttered an exclamation, "B'gosh!" and fell back, open-mouthed, upon his companions. They too, in another moment, broke into a feeble laugh, and lapsed against each other in sheepish silence. For a very pretty girl, handsomely dressed, swept out of the wood and advanced towards them.

Even at any time she would have been an enchanting

vision to these men, but in the glow of exercise and sparkle of anger she was bewildering. Her wonderful hair, the color of freshly hewn redwood, had escaped from her hat in her passage through the underbrush, and even as she swept down upon them in her majesty she was jabbing a hairpin into it with a dexterous feminine hand.

The three partners turned quite the color of her hair; Jackson Wells alone remained white and rigid. She came on, her very short upper lip showing her white teeth with her panting breath.

Rice was first to speak. "I beg — your pardon, Miss — I thought it was Brown — you know," he stammered.

But she only turned a blighting brown eye on the culprit, curled her short lip till it almost vanished in her scornful nostrils, drew her skirt aside with a jerk, and continued her way straight to Jackson Wells, where she halted.

"We did not know you were — here alone," he said apologetically.

"Thought I was afraid to come alone, did n't you? Well, you see, I 'm not. There!" She made another dive at her hat and hair, and brought the hat down wickedly over her eyebrows. "Gimme my plants."

Jackson had been astonished. He would have scarcely recognized in this willful beauty the red-haired girl whom he had boyishly hated, and with whom he had often quarreled. But there was a recollection — and with that recollection came an instinct of habit. He looked her squarely in the face, and, to the horror of his partners, said, "Say please!"

They had expected to see him fall, smitten with the hairpin! But she only stopped, and then in bitter irony said, "Please, Mr. Jackson Wells."

"I have n't dug them up yet — and it would serve you just right if I made you get them for yourself. But perhaps my friends here might help you — if you were civil."

The three partners seized spades and hoes and rushed forward eagerly. "Only show us what you want," they said in one voice. The young girl stared at them, and at Jackson. Then, with swift determination, she turned her back scornfully upon him, and with a dazzling smile which reduced the three men to absolute idiocy, said to the others, "I 'll show *you*," and marched away to the cabin.

"Ye must n't mind Jacksey," said Rice, sycophantically edging to her side, "he 's so cut up with losin' your father that he loved like a son, he is n't himself, and don't seem to know whether to ante up or pass out. And as for yourself, Miss — why — What was it he was sayin' only just as the young lady came?" he added, turning abruptly to Wyngate.

"Everything that cousin Josey planted with her own hands must be took up carefully and sent back — even though it 's killin' me to part with it," quoted Wyngate unblushingly, as he slouched along on the other side.

Miss Wells's eyes glared at them, though her mouth still smiled ravishingly. "I 'm sure I 'm troubling you."

In a few moments the plants were dug up and carefully laid together; indeed, the servile Briggs had added a few that she had not indicated.

"Would you mind bringing them as far as the buggy that 's coming down the hill?" she said, pointing to a buggy driven by a small boy which was slowly approaching the gate. The men tenderly lifted the uprooted plants, and proceeded solemnly, Miss Wells bringing up the rear, towards the gate, where Jackson Wells was still surlily lounging.

They passed out first. Miss Wells lingered for an instant, and then advancing her beautiful but audacious face within an inch of Jackson's, hissed out, "Make-believe! and hypocrite!"

"Cross-patch and sauce-box!" returned Jackson readily,

still under the malign influence of his boyish past, as she flounced away.

Presently he heard the buggy rattle away with his persecutor. But his partners still lingered on the road in earnest conversation, and when they did return it was with a singular awkwardness and embarrassment, which he naturally put down to a guilty consciousness of their foolish weakness in succumbing to the girl's demands.

But he was a little surprised when Dexter Rice approached him gloomily. "Of course," he began, "it ain't no call of ours to interfere in family affairs, and you 've a right to keep 'em to yourself, but if you 'd been fair and square and above-board in what you got off on us about this per— "

"What do you mean? " demanded the astonished Wells.

"Well — callin' her a 'red-haired gal.' "

"Well — she is a red-haired girl! " said Wells impatiently.

"A man," continued Rice pityingly, "that is so prejudiced as to apply such language to a beautiful orphan — torn with grief at the loss of a beloved but d——d misconstruing parent — merely because she begs a few vegetables out of his potato patch, ain't to be reasoned with. But when you come to look at this thing by and large, and as a fa'r-minded man, sonny, you 'll agree with us that the sooner you make terms with her the better. Considerin' your interest, Jacksey, — let alone the claims of humanity, — we 've concluded to withdraw from here until this thing is settled. She 's sort o' mixed us up with your feelings agin her, and naturally supposed we object to the color of her hair! and bein' a penniless orphan, rejected by her relations " —

"What stuff are you talking? " burst in Jackson. "Why, *you* saw she treated you better than she did me."

"Steady! There you go with that temper of yours that

frightened the girl! Of course she could see that *we* were fa'r-minded men, accustomed to the ways of society, and not upset by the visit of a lady, or the givin' up of a few green sticks! But let that slide! We 're goin' back home to-night, sonny, and when you 've thought this thing over and are straightened up and get your right bearin's, we 'll stand by you as before. We 'll put a man on to do your work on the Ledge, so ye need n't worry about that."

They were quite firm in this decision, — however absurd or obscure their conclusions, — and Jackson, after his first flash of indignation, felt a certain relief in their departure. But strangely enough, while he had hesitated about keeping the property when they were violently in favor of it, he now felt he was right in retaining it against their advice to compromise. The sentimental idea had vanished, with his recognition of his hateful cousin in the rôle of the injured orphan. And for the same odd reason her prettiness only increased his resentment. He was not deceived, — it was the same capricious, willful, red-haired girl.

The next day he set himself to work with that dogged steadiness that belonged to his simple nature, and which had endeared him to his partners. He set half a dozen Chinamen to work, and followed, although apparently directing, their methods. The great difficulty was to restrain and control the excessive vegetation, and he matched the small economies of the Chinese against the opulence of the Californian soil. The "garden patch" prospered; the neighbors spoke well of it and of him. But Jackson knew that this fierce harvest of early spring was to be followed by the sterility of the dry season, and that irrigation could alone make his work profitable in the end. He brought a pump to force the water from the little stream at the foot of the slope to the top, and allowed it to flow back through parallel trenches. Again Buckeye applauded! Only the gloomy barkeeper shook his head. "The moment you get

that thing to pay, Mr. Wells, you 'll find the hand of Brown, somewhere, getting ready to squeeze it dry!"

But Jackson Wells did not trouble himself about Brown, whom he scarcely knew. Once indeed, while trenching the slope, he was conscious that he was watched by two men from the opposite bank; but they were apparently satisfied by their scrutiny, and turned away. Still less did he concern himself with the movements of his cousin, who once or twice passed him superciliously in her buggy on the road. Again, she met him as one of a cavalcade of riders, mounted on a handsome but ill-tempered mustang, which she was managing with an ill-temper and grace equal to the brute's, to the alternate delight and terror of her cavalier. He could see that she had been petted and spoiled by her new guardian and his friends far beyond his conception. But why she should grudge him the little garden and the pastoral life for which she was so unsuited, puzzled him greatly.

One afternoon he was working near the road, when he was startled by an outcry from his Chinese laborers, their rapid dispersal from the strawberry beds where they were working, the splintering crash of his fence rails, and a commotion among the buckeyes. Furious at what seemed to him one of the usual wanton attacks upon coolie labor, he seized his pick and ran to their assistance. But he was surprised to find Jocelinda's mustang caught by the saddle and struggling between two trees, and its unfortunate mistress lying upon the strawberry bed. Shocked but cool-headed, Jackson released the horse first, who was lashing out and destroying everything within his reach, and then turned to his cousin. But she had already lifted herself to her elbow, and with a trickle of blood and mud on one fair cheek was surveying him scornfully under her tumbled hair and hanging hat.

"You don't suppose I was trespassing on your wretched

patch again, do you?" she said in a voice she was trying to keep from breaking. "It was that brute — who bolted."

"I don't suppose you were bullying *me* this time," he said, "but you were *your horse* — or it would n't have happened. Are you hurt?"

She tried to move; he offered her his hand, but she shied from it and struggled to her feet. She took a step forward — but limped.

"If you don't want my arm, let me call a Chinaman," he suggested.

She glared at him. "If you do I 'll scream!" she said in a low voice, and he knew she would. But at the same moment her face whitened, at which he slipped his arm under hers in a dexterous, business-like way, so as to support her weight. Then her hat got askew, and down came a long braid over his shoulder. He remembered it of old, only it was darker than then and two or three feet longer.

"If you could manage to limp as far as the gate and sit down on the bank, I 'd get your horse for you," he said. "I hitched it to a sapling."

"I saw you did — before you even offered to help me," she said scornfully.

"The horse would have got away — *you* could n't."

"If you only knew how I hated you!" she said, with a white face, but a trembling lip.

"I don't see how that would make things any better," he said. "Better wipe your face; it 's scratched and muddy, and you 've been rubbing your nose in my strawberry bed."

She snatched his proffered handkerchief suddenly, applied it to her face, and said, "I suppose it looks dreadful."

"Like a pig's," he returned cheerfully.

She walked a little more firmly after this, until they reached the gate. He seated her on the bank, and went back for the mustang. That beautiful brute, astounded

and sore from its contact with the top rail and brambles, was cowed and subdued as he led it back.

She had finished wiping her face, and was hurriedly disentangling two stinging tears from her long lashes, before she threw back his handkerchief. Her sprained ankle obliged him to lift her into the saddle and adjust her little shoe in the stirrup. He remembered when it was still smaller. "You used to ride astride," he said, a flood of recollection coming over him, "and it 's much safer with your temper and that brute."

"And you," she said in a lower voice, "used to be" — But the rest of her sentence was lost in the switch of the whip and the jump of her horse, but he thought the word was "kinder."

Perhaps this was why, after he watched her canter away, he went back to the garden, and from the bruised and trampled strawberry bed gathered a small basket of the finest fruit, covered them with leaves, added a paper with the highly ingenious witticism, "Picked up with you," and sent them to her by one of the Chinamen. Her forcible entry moved Li Sing, his foreman, also chief laundryman to the settlement, to reminiscences: —

"Me heap knew Missy Wells and ole man, who go dead. Ole man allee time make chin music to Missy. Allee time jaw jaw — allee time make lows — allee time cuttee up Missy! Plenty time lockee up Missy top-side house; no can walkee — no can talkee — no hab got — how can get? — must washee washee allee same Chinaman. Ole man go dead — Missy all lightee now. Plenty fun. Plenty stay in Blown's big house, top-side hill; Blown first-chop man."

Had he inquired he might have found this pagan testimony, for once, corroborated by the Christian neighbors.

But another incident drove all this from his mind. The little stream — the life blood of his garden — ran dry! Inquiry showed that it had been diverted two miles away into

Brown's libel! Wells's indignant protest elicited a formal reply from Brown, stating that he owned the adjacent mining claims, and reminding him that mining rights to water took precedence of the agricultural claim, but offering, by way of compensation, to purchase the land thus made useless and sterile. Jackson suddenly recalled the prophecy of the gloomy barkeeper. The end had come! But what could the scheming capitalist want with the land, equally useless — as his uncle had proved — for mining purposes? Could it be sheer malignity, incited by his vengeful cousin? But here he paused, rejecting the idea as quickly as it came. No! his partners were right! He was a trespasser on his cousin's heritage — there was no luck in it — he was wrong, and this was his punishment! Instead of yielding gracefully as he might, he must back down now, and she would never know his first real feelings. Even now he would make over the property to her as a free gift. But his partners had advanced him money from their scanty means to plant and work it. He believed that an appeal to their feelings would persuade them to forego even that, but he shrank even more from confessing his defeat to *them* than to her.

He had little heart in his labors that day, and dismissed the Chinamen early. He again examined his uncle's old mining claim on the top of the slope, but was satisfied that it had been a hopeless enterprise and wisely abandoned. It was sunset when he stood under the buckeyes, gloomily looking at the glow fade out of the west, as it had out of his boyish hopes. He had grown to like the place. It was the hour, too, when the few flowers he had cultivated gave back their pleasant odors, as if grateful for his care. And then he heard his name called.

It was his cousin, standing a few yards from him in evident hesitation. She was quite pale, and for a moment he thought she was still suffering from her fall, until he saw

in her nervous, half-embarrassed manner that it had no physical cause. Her old audacity and anger seemed gone, yet there was a queer determination in her pretty brows.

"Good-evening," he said.

She did not return his greeting, but pulling uneasily at her glove, said hesitatingly, "Uncle has asked you to sell him this land?"

"Yes."

"Well — don't!" she burst out abruptly.

He stared at her.

"Oh, I 'm not trying to keep you here," she went on, flashing back into her old temper; "so you need n't stare like that. I say 'Don't,' because it ain't right, it ain't fair."

"Why, he 's left me no alternative," he said.

"That 's just it — that 's why it 's mean and low. I don't care if he is our uncle."

Jackson was bewildered and shocked.

"I know it 's horrid to say it," she said, with a white face; "but it 's horrider to keep it in! Oh, Jack! when we were little, and used to fight and quarrel, I never was mean — was I? I never was underhanded — was I? I never lied — did I? And I can't lie now. Jack," she looked hurriedly around her, "*he* wants to get hold of the land — *he* thinks there 's gold in the slope and bank by the stream. He says dad was a fool to have located his claim so high up. Jack! did you ever prospect the bank?"

A dawning of intelligence came upon Jackson. "No," he said; "but," he added bitterly, "what 's the use? He owns the water now, — I could n't work it."

"But, Jack, *if* you found the color, this would be a *mining* claim! You could claim the water right; and, as it 's your land, your claim would be first!"

Jackson was startled. "Yes, *if* I found the color."

"You *would* find it."

"*Would?*"

"Yes! I *did* — on the sly! Yesterday morning on your slope by the stream, when no one was up! I washed a panful and got that." She took a piece of tissue paper from her pocket, opened it, and shook into her little palm three tiny pin points of gold.

"And that was your own idea, Jossy?"

"Yes!"

"Your very own?"

"Honest Injin!"

"Wish you may die?"

"True, O King!"

He opened his arms, and they mutually embraced. Then they separated, taking hold of each other's hands solemnly, and falling back until they were at arm's length. Then they slowly extended their arms sideways at full length, until this action naturally brought their faces and lips together. They did this with the utmost gravity three times, and then embraced again, rocking on pivoted feet like a metronome. Alas! it was no momentary inspiration. The most casual and indifferent observer could see that it was the result of long previous practice and shameless experience. And as such — it was a revelation and an explanation.

. . . . . .

"I always suspected that Jackson was playin' us about that red-haired cousin," said Rice two weeks later; "but I can't swallow that purp stuff about her puttin' him up to that dodge about a new gold discovery on a fresh claim, just to knock out Brown. No, sir. He found that gold in openin' these irrigatin' trenches, — the usual nigger luck, findin' what you 're not lookin' arter."

"Well, we can't complain, for he 's offered to work it on shares with us," said Briggs.

"Yes — until he 's ready to take in another partner."

"Not — Brown?" said his horrified companions.

"No! — but Brown's adopted daughter, — that red-haired cousin!"

MISS PEGGY'S PROTÉGÉS

THE string of Peggy's sunbonnet had become untied — so had her right shoe. These were not unusual accidents to a country girl of ten, but as both of her hands were full she felt obliged to put down what she was carrying. This was further complicated by the nature of her burden — a half-fledged shrike and a baby gopher — picked up in her walk. It was impossible to wrap them both in her apron without serious peril to one or the other; she could not put either down without the chance of its escaping. "It 's like that dreadful riddle of the ferryman who had to take the wolf and the sheep in his boat," said Peggy to herself, "though I don't believe anybody was ever so silly as to want to take a wolf across the river."

But, looking up, she beheld the approach of Sam Bedell, a six-foot tunnelman of the "Blue Cement Lead," and, hailing him, begged him to hold one of her captives. The giant, loathing the little mouse-like ball of fur, chose the shrike. "Hold him by the feet, for he bites *awful*," said Peggy, as the bird regarded Sam with the diabolically intense frown of his species. Then, dropping the gopher unconcernedly in her pocket, she proceeded to rearrange her toilet. The tunnelman waited patiently until Peggy had secured the nankeen sunbonnet around her fresh but freckled cheeks, and, with a reckless display of yellow flannel petticoat and stockings like peppermint sticks, had double-knotted her shoestrings viciously, when he ventured to speak.

"Same old game, Peggy? Thought you 'd got rather

discouraged with your 'happy family,' arter that new owl o' yours had gathered 'em in."

Peggy's cheek flushed slightly at this ungracious allusion to a former collection of hers, which had totally disappeared one evening after the introduction of a new member in the shape of a singularly venerable and peaceful-looking horned owl.

"I could have tamed *him*, too," said Peggy indignantly, "if Ned Myers, who gave him to me, had n't been training him to ketch things, and never let on anything about it to me. He was a reg'lar game owl!"

"And wot are ye goin' to do with the Colonel here?" said Sam, indicating under that gallant title the infant shrike, who, with his claws deeply imbedded in Sam's finger, was squatting like a malignant hunchback, and resisting his transfer to Peggy. "Won't *he* make it rather lively for the others? He looks pow'ful discontented for one so young."

"That 's his nater," said Peggy promptly. "Jess wait till I tame him. Ef he 'd been left along o' his folks, he 'd grow up like 'em. He 's a 'butcher bird' — wot they call a 'nine-killer' — kills nine birds a day! Yes! True ez you live! Sticks 'em up on thorns outside his nest, jest like a butcher's shop, till he gets hungry. I 've seen 'em!"

"And how do you kalkilate to tame him?" asked Sam.

"By being good to him and lovin' him," said Peggy, stroking the head of the bird with infinite gentleness.

"That means *you* 've got to do all the butchering for him?" said the cynical Sam.

Peggy shook her head, disdaining a verbal reply.

"Ye can't bring him up on sugar and crackers, like a Polly," persisted Sam.

"Ye ken do anythin' with critters, if you ain't afeerd of 'em and love 'em," said Peggy shyly.

The tall tunnelman, looking down into the depths of Peggy's sunbonnet, saw something in the round blue eyes and grave little mouth that made him think so too. But here Peggy's serious little face took a shade of darker concern as her arm went down deeper into her pocket, and her eyes got rounder.

"It 's — it 's — *burrered out!*" she said breathlessly.

The giant leaped briskly to one side. "Hol' on," said Peggy abstractedly. With infinite gravity she followed, with her fingers, a seam of her skirt down to the hem, popped them quickly under it, and produced, with a sigh of relief, the missing gopher.

"You 'll do," said Sam, in fearful admiration. "Mebbe you 'll make suthin' out o' the Colonel too. But I never took stock in that there owl. He was too durned self-righteous for a decent bird. Now, run along afore anythin' else fetches loose ag'in. So long!"

He patted the top of her sunbonnet, gave a little pull to the short brown braid that hung behind her temptingly, — which no miner was ever known to resist, — and watched her flutter off with her spoils. He had done so many times before, for the great, foolish heart of the Blue Cement Ridge had gone out to Peggy Baker, the little daughter of the blacksmith, quite early. There were others of the family, notably two elder sisters, invincible at picnics and dances, but Peggy was as necessary to these men as the blue jay that swung before them in the dim woods, the squirrel that whisked across their morning path, or the woodpecker who beat his tattoo at their midday meal from the hollow pine above them. She was part of the nature that kept them young. Her truancies and vagrancies concerned them not, — she was a law to herself, like the birds and squirrels. There were bearded lips to hail her wherever she went, and a blue or red-shirted arm always stretched out in any perilous pass or dangerous crossing.

Her peculiar tastes were an outcome of her nature, assisted by her surroundings. Left a good deal to herself in her infancy, she made playfellows of animated nature around her, without much reference to selection or fitness, but always with a fearlessness that was the result of her own observation, and unhampered by tradition or other children's timidity. She had no superstition regarding the venom of toads, the poison of spiders, or the ear-penetrating capacity of earwigs. She had experiences and revelations of her own, — which she kept sacredly to herself, as children do, — and one was in regard to a rattlesnake, partly induced, however, by the indiscreet warning of her elders. She was cautioned *not* to take her bread and milk into the woods, and was told the affecting story of the little girl who was once regularly visited by a snake that partook of *her* bread and milk, and who was ultimately found rapping the head of the snake for gorging more than his share, and not "taking a 'poon as me do." It is needless to say that this incautious caution fired Peggy's adventurous spirit. *She* took a bowlful of milk to the haunt of a "rattler" near her home, but, without making the pretense of sharing it, generously left the whole to the reptile. After repeating this hospitality for three or four days, she was amazed one morning on returning to the house to find the snake — an elderly one with a dozen rattles — devotedly following her. Alarmed, not for her own safety nor that of her family, but for the existence of her grateful friend in danger of the blacksmith's hammer, she took a circuitous route leading it away. Then recalling a bit of woodland lore once communicated to her by a charcoal-burner, she broke a spray of the white ash, and laid it before her in the track of the rattlesnake. He stopped instantly, and remained motionless without crossing the slight barrier. She repeated this experiment on later occasions, until the reptile understood her. She kept the experience to herself,

but one day it was witnessed by a tunnelman. On that day Peggy's reputation was made!

From this time henceforth the major part of Blue Cement Ridge became serious collectors for what was known as "Peggy's menagerie," and two of the tunnelmen constructed a stockaded inclosure — not half a mile from the blacksmith's cabin, but unknown to him — for the reception of specimens. For a long time its existence was kept a secret between Peggy and her loyal friends. Her parents, aware of her eccentric tastes only through the introduction of such smaller creatures as lizards, toads, and tarantulas into their house, — which usually escaped from their tin cans and boxes and sought refuge in the family slippers, — had frowned upon her zoölogical studies. Her mother found that her woodland rambles entailed an extraordinary wear and tear of her clothing. A pinafore reduced to ribbons by a young fox, and a straw hat half swallowed by a mountain kid, did not seem to be a natural incident to an ordinary walk to the schoolhouse. Her sisters thought her tastes "low," and her familiar association with the miners inconsistent with their own dignity. But Peggy went regularly to school, was a fair scholar in elementary studies (what she knew of natural history, in fact, quite startled her teachers), and being also a teachable child, was allowed some latitude. As for Peggy herself, she kept her own faith unshaken; her little creed, whose shibboleth was not "to be afraid" of God's creatures, but to "love 'em," sustained her through reprimand, torn clothing, and, it is to be feared, occasional bites and scratches from the loved ones themselves.

The unsuspected contiguity of the "menagerie" to the house had its drawbacks, and once nearly exposed her. A mountain wolf cub, brought especially for her from the higher northern Sierras with great trouble and expense by Jack Ryder, of the Lone Star Lead, unfortunately escaped

from the menagerie just as the child seemed to be in a fair way of taming it. Yet it had been already familiarized enough with civilization to induce it to stop in its flight and curiously examine the blacksmith's shop. A shout from the blacksmith and a hurled hammer sent it flying again, with Mr. Baker and his assistant in full pursuit. But it quickly distanced them with its long, tireless gallop, and they were obliged to return to the forge, lost in wonder and conjecture. For the blacksmith had recognized it as a stranger to the locality, and as a man of oracular pretension had a startling theory to account for its presence. This he confided to the editor of the local paper, and the next issue contained an editorial paragraph: "Our presage of a severe winter in the higher Sierras, and consequent spring floods in the valleys, has been startlingly confirmed! Mountain wolves have been seen in Blue Cement Ridge, and our esteemed fellow citizen, Mr. Ephraim Baker, yesterday encountered a half-starved cub entering his premises in search of food. Mr. Baker is of the opinion that the mother of the cub, driven down by stress of weather, was in the immediate vicinity." Nothing but the distress of the only responsible mother of the cub, Peggy, and loyalty to her, kept Jack Ryder from exposing the absurdity publicly, but for weeks the camp fires of Blue Cement Ridge shook with the suppressed and unhallowed joy of the miners, who were in the guilty secret.

But, fortunately for Peggy, the most favored of her cherished possessions was not obliged to be kept secret. That one exception was an Indian dog! This was also a gift, and had been procured with great "difficulty" by a "packer" from an Indian encampment on the Oregon frontier. The "difficulty" was, in plain English, that it had been stolen from the Indians at some peril to the stealer's scalp. It was a mongrel to all appearances, of no recognized breed or outward significance, yet of a quality dis-

tinctly its own. It was absolutely and totally uncivilized. Whether this was a hereditary trait or the result of degeneracy, no one knew. It refused to enter a house; it would not stay in a kennel. It would not eat in public, but gorged ravenously and stealthily in the shadows. It had the slink of a tramp, and in its patched and mottled hide seemed to simulate the rags of a beggar. It had the tirelessness without the affected limp of a coyote. Yet it had none of the ferocity of barbarians. With teeth that could gnaw through the stoutest rope and toughest lariat, it never bared them in anger. It was cringing without being amiable or submissive; it was gentle without being affectionate.

Yet almost insensibly it began to yield to Peggy's faith and kindness. Gradually it seemed to single her out as the one being in this vast white-faced and fully clothed community that it could trust. It presently allowed her to half drag, half lead it to and from school, although on the approach of a stranger it would bite through the rope or frantically endeavor to efface itself in Peggy's petticoats. It was trying, even to the child's sweet gravity, to face the ridicule excited by its appearance on the road; and its habit of carrying its tail between its legs — at such an inflexible curve that, on the authority of Sam Bedell, a misstep caused it to "turn a back somersault" — was painfully disconcerting. But Peggy endured this, as she did the greater dangers of the High Street in the settlement, where she had often, at her own risk, absolutely to drag the dazed and bewildered creature from under the wheels of carts and the heels of horses. But this shyness wore off — or rather was eventually lost in the dog's complete and utter absorption in Peggy. His limited intelligence and imperfect perceptions were excited for her alone. His singularly keen scent detected her wherever or how remote she might be. Her passage along a "blind trail," her deviations from the school path, her more distant excursions, were all mysteri-

ously known to him. It seemed as if his senses were concentrated in this one faculty. No matter how unexpected or unfamiliar the itinerary, "Lo, the poor Indian" — as the men had nicknamed him (in possible allusion to his "untutored mind") — always arrived promptly and silently.

It was to this singular faculty that Peggy owed one of her strangest experiences. One Saturday afternoon she was returning from an errand to the village when she was startled by the appearance of Lo in her path. For the reason already given, she no longer took him with her to these active haunts of civilization, but had taught him on such occasions to remain as a guard outside the stockade which contained her treasures. After reading him a severe lecture on this flagrant abandonment of his trust, enforced with great seriousness and an admonitory forefinger, she was concerned to see that the animal appeared less agitated by her reproof than by some other disturbance. He ran ahead of her, instead of at her heels as was his usual custom, and barked — a thing he rarely did. Presently she thought she discovered the cause of this in the appearance from the wood of a dozen men armed with guns. They seemed to be strangers, but among them she recognized the deputy sheriff of the settlement. The leader noticed her, and, after a word or two with the others, the deputy approached her.

"You and Lo had better be scooting home by the high-road, outer this — or ye might get hurt," he said, half playfully, half seriously.

Peggy looked fearlessly at the men and their guns.

"Look ez ef you was huntin'," she said curiously.

"We are!" said the leader.

"Wot you huntin'?"

The deputy glanced at the others. "B'ar!" he replied.

"B'ar!" repeated the child with the quick resentment which a palpable falsehood always provoked in her. "There

There ain't no b'ar in ten miles

same direction. She would have yet time to reach the stockade and secure what was left of her treasures before they came up and drove her away. Yet she had to make a long circuit to avoid the blacksmith's shop and cabin, before she saw the stockade, lifting its four-foot walls around an inclosure a dozen feet square, in the midst of a manzanita thicket. But she could see also broken coops, pens, cages, and boxes lying before it, and stopped once, even in her grief and indignation, to pick up a ruby-throated lizard, one of its late inmates that had stopped in the trail, stiffened to stone at her approach. The next moment she was before the roofless walls, and then stopped, stiffened like the lizard. For out of that peaceful ruin which had once held the wild and untamed vagabonds of earth and sky, arose a type of savagery and barbarism the child had never before looked upon, — the head and shoulders of a hunted, desperate man!

His head was bare, and his hair matted with sweat over his forehead; his face was unshorn, and the black roots of his beard showed against the deadly pallor of his skin, except where it was scratched by thorns, or where the red spots over his cheek bones made his cheeks look as if painted. His eyes were as insanely bright, he panted as quickly, he showed his white teeth as perpetually, his movements were as convulsive, as those captured animals she had known. Yet he did not attempt to fly, and it was only when, with a sudden effort and groan of pain, he half lifted himself above the stockade, that she saw that his leg, bandaged with his cravat and handkerchief, stained a dull red, dragged helplessly beneath him. He stared at her vacantly for a moment, and then looked hurriedly into the wood behind her.

The child was more interested than frightened, and more curious than either. She had grasped the situation at a glance. It was the hunted and the hunters. Suddenly he

started and reached for his rifle, which he had apparently set down outside when he climbed into the stockade. He had just caught sight of a figure emerging from the wood at a distance. But the weapon was out of his reach.

"Hand me that gun!" he said roughly.

But Peggy did not stir. The figure came more plainly and quite unconsciously into full view, an easy shot at that distance.

The man uttered a horrible curse, and turned a threatening face on the child. But Peggy had seen something like that in animals *she* had captured. She only said gravely, —

"Ef you shoot that gun you 'll bring 'em all down on you!"

"All?" he demanded.

"Yes! a dozen folks with guns like yours," said Peggy. "You jest crouch down and lie low. Don't move! Watch me."

The man dropped below the stockade. Peggy ran swiftly towards the unsuspecting figure, evidently the leader of the party, but deviated slightly to snatch a tiny spray from a white-ash tree. She never knew that in that brief interval the wounded man, after a supreme effort, had possessed himself of his weapon, and for a moment had covered *her* with its deadly muzzle. She ran on fearlessly until she saw that she had attracted the attention of the leader, when she stopped and began to wave the white-ash wand before her. The leader halted, conferred with some one behind him, who proved to be the deputy sheriff. Stepping out he advanced towards Peggy, and called sharply, —

"I told you to get out of this! Come, be quick!"

"You 'd better get out yourself," said Peggy, waving her ash spray, "and quicker, too."

The deputy stopped, staring at the spray. "Wot 's up?"

"Rattlers."

"Where?"

"Everywhere round ye — a reg'lar nest of 'em! That 's your way round!" She pointed to the right, and again began beating the underbrush with her wand. The men had, meantime, huddled together in consultation. It was evident that the story of Peggy and her influence on rattlesnakes was well known, and, in all probability, exaggerated. After a pause, the whole party filed off to the right, making a long circuit of the unseen stockade, and were presently lost in the distance. Peggy ran back to the fugitive. The fire of savagery and desperation in his eyes had gone out, but had been succeeded by a glazing film of faintness.

"Can you — get me — some water?" he whispered.

The stockade was near a spring, — a necessity for the menagerie. Peggy brought him water in a dipper. She sighed a little; her "butcher bird" — now lost forever — had been the last to drink from it!

The water seemed to revive him. "The rattlesnakes scared the cowards," he said, with an attempt to smile. "Were there many rattlers?"

"There was n't *any*," said Peggy, a little spitefully, "'cept *you* — a two-legged rattler!"

The rascal grinned at the compliment.

"*One*-legged, you mean," he said, indicating his helpless limb.

Peggy's heart relented slightly. "Wot you goin' to do now?" she said. "You can't stay on *there*, you know. It b'longs to *me!*" She was generous, but practical.

"Were those things I fired out yours?"

"Yes."

"Mighty rough of me."

Peggy was slightly softened. "Kin you walk?"

"No."

"Kin you crawl?"

"Not as far as a rattler."

"Ez far ez that clearin'?"

"Yes."

"There 's a hoss tethered out in that clearin'. I kin shift him to this end."

"You 're white all through," said the man gravely.

Peggy ran off to the clearing. The horse belonged to Sam Bedell, but he had given Peggy permission to ride it whenever she wished. This was equivalent, in Peggy's mind, to a permission to *place* him where she wished. She consequently led him to a point nearest the stockade, and, thoughtfully, close beside a stump. But this took some time, and when she arrived she found the fugitive already there, very thin and weak, but still smiling.

"Ye kin turn him loose when you get through with him; he 'll find his way back," said Peggy. "Now I must go."

Without again looking at the man, she ran back to the stockade. Then she paused until she heard the sound of hoofs crossing the highway in the opposite direction from which the pursuers had crossed, and knew that the fugitive had got away. Then she took the astonished and still motionless lizard from her pocket, and proceeded to restore the broken coops and cages to the empty stockade.

But she never reconstructed her menagerie nor renewed her collection. People said she had tired of her whim, and that really she was getting too old for such things. Perhaps she was. But she never got old enough to reveal her story of the last wild animal she had tamed by kindness. Nor was she quite sure of it herself, until a few years afterwards on Commencement Day at a boarding-school at San José, when they pointed out to her one of the most respectable trustees. But they said he was once a gambler, who had shot a man with whom he had quarreled, and was nearly caught and lynched by a Vigilance Committee.

THE GODDESS OF EXCELSIOR

WHEN the two isolated mining companies encamped on Sycamore Creek discovered on the same day the great "Excelsior Lead," they met around a neutral camp fire with that grave and almost troubled demeanor which distinguished the successful prospector in those days. Perhaps the term "prospectors" could hardly be used for men who had labored patiently and light-heartedly in the one spot for over three years to gain a daily yield from the soil which gave them barely the necessaries of life. Perhaps this was why, now that their reward was beyond their most sanguine hopes, they mingled with this characteristic gravity an ambition and resolve peculiarly their own. Unlike most successful miners, they had no idea of simply realizing their wealth and departing to invest or spend it elsewhere, as was the common custom. On the contrary, that night they formed a high resolve to stand or fall by their claims, to develop the resources of the locality, to build up a town, and to devote themselves to its growth and welfare. And to this purpose they bound themselves that night by a solemn and legal compact.

Many circumstances lent themselves to so original a determination. The locality was healthful, picturesque, and fertile. Sycamore Creek, a considerable tributary of the Sacramento, furnished them a generous water supply at all seasons; its banks were well wooded and interspersed with undulating meadow land. Its distance from stage-coach communication — nine miles — could easily be abridged by a wagon road over a practically level country. Indeed, all

the conditions for a thriving settlement were already there. It was natural, therefore, that the most sanguine anticipations were indulged by the more youthful of the twenty members of this sacred compact. The sites of a hotel, a bank, the express company's office, stage office, and court-house, with other necessary buildings, were all mapped out, and supplemented by a theatre, a public park, and a terrace along the river bank! It was only when Clinton Grey, an intelligent but youthful member, on offering a plan of the town with five avenues eighty feet wide, radiating from a central plaza and the court-house, explained that "it could be commanded by artillery in case of an armed attack upon the building," that it was felt that a line must be drawn in anticipatory suggestion. Nevertheless, although their determination was unabated, at the end of six months little had been done beyond the building of a wagon road and the importation of new machinery for the working of the lead. The peculiarity of their design debarred any tentative or temporary efforts; they wished the whole settlement to spring up in equal perfection, so that the first stage-coach over the new road could arrive upon the completed town. "We don't want to show up in a 'b'iled shirt' and a plug hat, and our trousers stuck in our boots," said a figurative speaker. Nevertheless, practical necessity compelled them to build the hotel first for their own occupation, pending the erection of their private dwellings on allotted sites. The hotel, a really elaborate structure for the locality and period, was a marvel to the workmen and casual teamsters. It was luxuriously fitted and furnished. Yet it was in connection with this outlay that the event occurred which had a singular effect upon the fancy of the members.

Washington Trigg, a Western member, who had brought up the architect and builder from San Francisco, had returned in a state of excitement. He had seen at an art exhibition in that city a small replica of a famous statue of

California, and, without consulting his fellow members, had ordered a larger copy for the new settlement. He, however, made up for his precipitancy by an extravagant description of his purchase, which impressed even the most cautious. "It 's the figger of a mighty pretty girl, in them spirit clothes they allus wear, holding a divinin' rod for findin' gold afore her in one hand; all the while she 's hidin' behind her, in the other hand, a branch o' thorns out of sight. The idea bein' — don't you see? — that blamed old 'forty-niners like us, or ordinary greenhorns, ain't allowed to see the difficulties they 've got to go through before reaching a strike. Mighty cute, ain't it? It 's to be made life-size, — that is, about the size of a girl of that kind, don't you see?" he explained somewhat vaguely, "and will look powerful fetchin' standin' onto a pedestal in the hall of the hotel." In reply to some further cautious inquiry as to the exact details of the raiment and of any possible shock to the modesty of lady guests at the hotel, he replied confidently, "Oh, *that 's* all right! It 's the regulation uniform of goddesses and angels, — sorter as if they 'd caught up a sheet or a cloud to fling round 'em before coming into this world afore folks; and being an allegory, so to speak, it ain't as if it was me or you prospectin' in high water. And, being of bronze, it" —

"Looks like a squaw, eh?" interrupted a critic, "or a cursed Chinaman?"

"And if it 's of metal it will weigh a ton! How are we going to get it up here?" said another.

But here Mr. Trigg was on sure ground. "I 've ordered it cast holler, and, if necessary, in two sections," he returned triumphantly. "A child could tote it round and set it up."

Its arrival was therefore looked forward to with great expectancy when the hotel was finished and occupied by the combined Excelsior companies. It was to come from

New York via San Francisco, where, however, there was some delay in its transshipment, and still further delay at Sacramento. It finally reached the settlement over the new wagon road, and was among the first freight carried there by the new express company, and delivered into the new express office. The box — a packing-case, nearly three feet square by five feet long — bore superficial marks of travel and misdirection, inasmuch as the original address was quite obliterated and the outside lid covered with corrected labels. It was carried to a private sitting-room in the hotel, where its beauty was to be first disclosed to the president of the united companies, three of the committee, and the excited and triumphant purchaser. A less favored crowd of members and workmen gathered curiously outside the room. Then the lid was carefully removed, revealing a quantity of shavings and packing paper which still hid the outlines of the goddess. When this was promptly lifted a stare of blank astonishment fixed the faces of the party! It was succeeded by a quick, hysteric laugh, and then a dead silence.

Before them lay a dressmaker's dummy, the wire and padded model on which dresses are fitted and shown. With its armless and headless bust, abruptly ending in a hooped wire skirt, it completely filled the sides of the box.

"Shut the door," said the president promptly.

The order was obeyed. The single hysteric shriek of laughter had been followed by a deadly, ironical silence. The president, with supernatural gravity, lifted it out and set it up on its small, round, disk-like pedestal.

"It 's some cussed fool blunder of that confounded express company," burst out the unlucky purchaser. But there was no echo to his outburst. He looked around with a timid, tentative smile. But no other smile followed his.

"It looks," said the president, with portentous gravity, "like the beginnings of a fine woman, that *might* show up,

if you gave her time, into a first-class goddess. Of course she ain't all here: other boxes with sections of her, I reckon, are under way from her factory, and will meander along in the course of the year. Considerin' this as a sample—I think, gentlemen," he added, with gloomy precision, "we are prepared to accept it, and signify we 'll take more."

"It ain't, perhaps, exactly the idee that we 've been led to expect from previous description," said Dick Flint, with deeper seriousness; "for instance, this yer branch of thorns we heard of ez bein' held behind her is wantin', as is the arms that held it; but even if they had arrived, anybody could see the thorns through them wires, and so give the hull show away."

"Jam it into its box again, and we 'll send it back to the confounded express company with a cussin' letter," again thundered the wretched purchaser.

"No, sonny," said the president with gentle but gloomy determination, "we 'll fasten on to this little show jest as it is, and see what follows. It ain't every day that a first-class sell like this is worked off on us *accidentally*."

It was quite true! The settlement had long since exhausted every possible form of practical joking, and languished for a new sensation. And here it was! It was not a thing to be treated angrily, nor lightly, nor dismissed with that single hysteric laugh. It was capable of the greatest possibilities! Indeed, as Washington Trigg looked around on the imperturbably ironical faces of his companions, he knew that they felt more true joy over the blunder than they would in the possession of the real statue. But an exclamation from the fifth member, who was examining the box, arrested their attention.

"There 's suthin' else here!"

He had found under the heavier wrapping a layer of tissue-paper, and under that a further envelope of linen,

lightly stitched together. A knife blade quickly separated the stitches, and the linen was carefully unfolded. It displayed a beautifully trimmed evening dress of pale blue satin, with a dressing-gown of some exquisite white fabric armed with lace. The men gazed at it in silence, and then the one single expression broke from their lips, —

"Her duds!"

"Stop, boys," said "Clint" Grey, as a movement was made to lift the dress towards the model, "leave that to a man who knows. What 's the use of my having left five grown-up sisters in the States if I have n't brought a little experience away with me? This sort of thing ain't to be ' pulled on ' like trousers. No, sir! — *this* is the way she 's worked."

With considerable dexterity, unexpected gentleness, and some taste, he shook out the folds of the skirt delicately and lifted it over the dummy, settling it skillfully upon the wire hoops, and drawing the bodice over the padded shoulders. This he then proceeded to fasten with hooks and eyes, — a work of some patience. Forty eager fingers stretched out to assist him, but were waved aside, with a look of pained decorum as he gravely completed his task. Then falling back, he bade the others do the same, and they formed a contemplative semicircle before the figure.

Up to that moment a delighted but unsmiling consciousness of their own absurdities, a keen sense of the humorous possibilities of the original blunder, and a mischievous recognition of the mortification of Trigg — whose only safety now lay in accepting the mistake in the same spirit — had determined these grown-up schoolboys to artfully protract a joke that seemed to be providentially delivered into their hands. But *now* an odd change crept on them. The light from the open window that gave upon the enormous pines and the rolling prospect up to the dim heights of the Sierras fell upon this strange, incongruous, yet perfectly artistic fig-

ure. For the dress was the skillful creation of a great Parisian artist, and in its exquisite harmony of color, shape, and material it not only hid the absurd model, but clothed it with an alarming grace and refinement! A queer feeling of awe, of shame, and of unwilling admiration took possession of them. Some of them — from remote Western towns — had never seen the like before; those who *had* had forgotten it in those five years of self-exile, of healthy independence, and of contiguity to Nature in her unaffected simplicity. All had been familiar with the garish, extravagant, and dazzling femininity of the Californian towns and cities, but never had they known anything approaching the ideal grace of this type of exalted, even if artificial, womanhood. And although in the fierce freedom of their little republic they had laughed to scorn such artificiality, a few yards of satin and lace cunningly fashioned, and thrown over a frame of wood and wire, touched them now with a strange sense of its superiority. The better to show its attractions, Clinton Grey had placed the figure near a full-length, gold-framed mirror, beside a marble-topped table. Yet how cheap and tawdry these splendors showed beside this work of art! How cruel was the contrast of their own rough working clothes to this miracle of adornment which that same mirror reflected! And even when Clinton Grey, the enthusiast, looked towards his beloved woods for relief, he could not help thinking of them as a more fitting frame for this strange goddess than this new house into which she had strayed. Their gravity became real; their gibes in some strange way had vanished.

"Must have cost a pile of money," said one, merely to break an embarrassing silence.

"My sister had a friend who brought over a dress from Paris, not as high-toned as that, that cost five hundred dollars," said Clinton Grey.

"How much did you say that spirit-clad old hag of yours

cost — thorns and all?" said the president, turning sharply on Trigg.

Trigg swallowed this depreciation of his own purchase meekly. "Seven hundred and fifty dollars, without the express charges."

"That's only two-fifty more," said the president thoughtfully, "if we call it quits."

"But," said Trigg in alarm, "we must send it back."

"Not much, sonny," said the president promptly. "We'll hang on to this until we hear where that thorny old chump of yours has fetched up and is actin' her conundrums, and mebbe we can swap even."

"But how will we explain it to the boys?" queried Trigg. "They're waitin' outside to see it."

"There *won't* be any explanation," said the president, in the same tone of voice in which he had ordered the door shut. "We'll just say that the statue has n't come, which is the frozen truth; and this box only contained some silk curtain decorations we'd ordered, which is only half a lie. And," still more firmly, "*this secret does n't go out of this room, gentlemen* — or I ain't your president! I'm not going to let you give yourselves away to that crowd outside — you hear me? Have you ever allowed your unfettered intellect to consider what they'd say about this, — what a godsend it would be to every man we'd ever had a 'pull' on in this camp? Why, it would last 'em a whole year; we'd never hear the end of it! No, gentlemen! I prefer to live here without shootin' my fellow man, but I can't promise it if they once start this joke agin us!"

There was a swift approval of this sentiment, and the five members shook hands solemnly.

"Now," said the president, "we'll just fold up that dress again, and put it with the figure in this closet" — he opened a large dressing-chest in the suite of rooms in which they stood — "and we'll each keep a key. We'll retain

this room for committee purposes, so that no one need see the closet. See? Now take off the dress! Be careful there! You 're not handlin' pay dirt, though it 's about as expensive! Steady!"

Yet it was wonderful to see the solicitude and care with which the dress was re-covered and folded in its linen wrapper.

"Hold on," exclaimed Trigg, — as the dummy was lifted into the chest, — "we have n't tried on the other dress!"

"Yes! yes!" repeated the others eagerly; "there 's another!"

"We 'll keep that for next committee meeting, gentlemen," said the president decisively. "Lock her up, Trigg."

The three following months wrought a wonderful change in Excelsior, — wonderful even in that land of rapid growth and progress. Their organized and matured plans, executed by a full force of workmen from the county town, completed the twenty cottages for the members, the bank, and the town hall. Visitors and intending settlers flocked over the new wagon road to see this new Utopia, whose founders, holding the land and its improvements as a corporate company, exercised the right of dictating the terms on which settlers were admitted. The feminine invasion was not yet potent enough to affect their consideration, either through any refinement or attractiveness; being composed chiefly of the industrious wives and daughters of small traders or temporary artisans. Yet it was found necessary to confide the hotel to the management of Mr. Dexter Marsh, his wife, and one intelligent but somewhat plain daughter, who looked after the accounts. There were occasional lady visitors at the hotel, attracted from the neighboring towns and settlements by its picturesqueness and a vague suggestiveness of its being a watering-place — and

there was the occasional flash in the decorous street of a Sacramento or San Francisco gown. It is needless to say that to the five men who held the guilty secret of Commit tee Room No. 4 it only strengthened their belief in the superelegance of their hidden treasure. At their last meeting they had fitted the second dress — which turned out to be a vapory summer house-frock or morning wrapper — over the dummy, and opinions were divided as to its equality with the first. However, the same subtle harmony of detail and grace of proportion characterized it.

"And you see," said Clint Grey, "it 's jest the sort o' rig in which a man would be most likely to know her — and not in her war-paint, which would be only now and then."

Already "*she*" had become an individuality!

"Hush!" said the president. He had turned towards the door, at which some one was knocking lightly.

"Come in."

The door opened upon Miss Marsh, secretary and hotel assistant. She had a business aspect, and an open letter in her hand, but hesitated at the evident confusion she had occasioned. Two of the gentlemen had absolutely blushed, and the others regarded her with inane smiles or affected seriousness. They all coughed slightly.

"I beg your pardon," she said, not ungracefully, a slight color coming into her sallow cheek, which, in conjunction with the gold eye-glasses, gave her, at least in the eyes of the impressible Clint, a certain piquancy. "But my father said you were here in committee and I might consult you. I can come again, if you are busy."

She had addressed the president, partly from his office, his comparatively extreme age — he must have been at least thirty! — and possibly for his extremer good looks. He said hurriedly, "It 's just an informal meeting;" and then, more politely, "What can we do for you?"

"We have an application for a suite of rooms next week," she said, referring to the letter, "and as we shall be rather full, father thought you gentlemen might be willing to take another larger room for your meetings, and give up these, which are part of a suite — and perhaps not exactly suitable" —

"Quite impossible!" "Quite so!" "Really out of the question," said the members, in a rapid chorus.

The young girl was evidently taken aback at this unanimity of opposition. She stared at them curiously, and then glanced around the room. "We 're quite comfortable here," said the president explanatorily, "and — in fact — it 's just what we want."

"We could give you a closet like that which you could lock up, and a mirror," she suggested, with the faintest trace of a smile.

"Tell your father, Miss Marsh," said the president, with dignified politeness, "that while we cannot submit to any change, we fully appreciate his business foresight, and are quite prepared to see that the hotel is properly compensated for our retaining these rooms." As the young girl withdrew with a puzzled curtsy he closed the door, placed his back against it, and said, —

"What the deuce did she mean by speaking of that closet?"

"Reckon she allowed we kept some fancy drinks in there," said Trigg; "and calkilated that we wanted the marble stand and mirror to put our glasses on and make it look like a swell private bar, that 's all!"

"Humph," said the president.

Their next meeting, however, was a hurried one, and as the president arrived late, when the door closed smartly behind him he was met by the worried faces of his colleagues.

"Here 's a go!" said Trigg excitedly, producing a folded paper. "The game 's up, the hull show is busted; that

cussed old statue — the reg'lar old hag herself — is on her way here! There 's a bill o' lading and the express company's letter, and she 'll be trundled down here by express at any moment."

"Well?" said the president quietly.

"Well!" replied the members aghast. "Do you know what that means?"

"That we must rig her up in the hall on a pedestal, as we reckoned to do," returned the president coolly.

"But you don't *sabe*," said Clinton Grey; "that 's all very well as to the hag, but now we must give *her* up," with an adoring glance towards the closet.

"Does the letter say so?"

"No," said Trigg hesitatingly, "no! But I reckon we can't keep *both*."

"Why not?" said the president imperturbably, "if we paid for 'em?"

As the men only stared in reply he condescended to explain.

"Look here! I calculated all these risks after our last meeting. While you boys were just fussin' round, doin' nothing, I wrote to the express company that a box of women's damaged duds had arrived here, while we were looking for our statue; that you chaps were so riled at bein' sold by them that you dumped the whole blamed thing in the creek. But I added, if they 'd let me know what the damage was, I 'd send 'em a draft to cover it. After a spell of waitin' they said they 'd call it square for two hundred dollars, considering our disappointment. And I sent the draft. That 's spurred them up to get over our statue, I reckon. And now that it 's coming, it will set us right with the boys."

"And *she*," said Clinton Grey again, pointing to the locked chest, "belongs to us?"

"Until we can find some lady guest that will take her with the rooms," returned the president, a little cynically.

But the arrival of the real statue and its erection in the hotel vestibule created a new sensation. The members of the Excelsior Company were loud in its praises, except the executive committee, whose coolness was looked upon by the others as an affectation of superiority. It awakened the criticism and jealousy of the nearest town.

"We hear," said the "Red Dog Advertiser," "that the long-promised statue has been put up in that high-toned Hash Dispensary they call a hotel at Excelsior. It represents an emaciated squaw in a scanty blanket gathering roots, and carrying a bit of thorn-bush kindlings behind her. The high-toned, close corporation of Excelsior may consider this a fair allegory of California; *we* should say it looks mighty like a prophetic forecast of a hard winter on Sycamore Creek and scarcity of provisions. However, it is n't our funeral, though it 's rather depressing to the casual visitor on his way to dinner. For a long time this work of art was missing and supposed to be lost, but by being sternly and persistently rejected at every express office on the route, it was at last taken in at Excelsior."

There was some criticism nearer home.

"What do you think of it, Miss Marsh?" said the president politely to that active young secretary, as he stood before it in the hall. The young woman adjusted her eyeglasses over her aquiline nose.

"As an idea or a woman, sir?"

"As a woman, madam," said the president, letting his brown eyes slip for a moment from Miss Marsh's corn-colored crest over her straight but scant figure down to her smart slippers.

"Well, sir, she could wear *your* boots, and there is n't a corset in Sacramento would go round her."

"Thank you!" he returned gravely, and moved away.

For a moment a wild idea of securing possession of the figure some dark night, and, in company with his fellow-conspirators, of trying those beautiful clothes upon her, passed through his mind, but he dismissed it. And then occurred a strange incident, which startled even his cool, American sanity.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and he was returning to a bedroom at the hotel which he temporarily occupied during the painting of his house. It was quite late, he having spent the evening with a San Francisco friend after a business conference which assured him of the remarkable prosperity of Excelsior. It was therefore with some human exaltation that he looked around the sleeping settlement which had sprung up under the magic wand of their good fortune. The full moon had idealized their youthful designs with something of their own youthful coloring, graciously softening the garish freshness of paint and plaster, hiding with discreet obscurity the disrupted banks and broken woods at the beginning and end of their broad avenues, paving the rough river terrace with tessellated shadows, and even touching the rapid stream which was the source of their wealth with a Pactolean glitter.

The windows of the hotel before him, darkened within, flashed in the moonbeams like the casements of Aladdin's palace. Mingled with his ambition, to-night, were some softer fancies, rarely indulged by him in his forecast of the future of Excelsior, — a dream of some fair partner in his life, after this task was accomplished, yet always of some one moving in a larger world than his youth had known. Rousing the half sleeping porter, he found, however, only the spectral gold-seeker in the vestibule, — the rays of his solitary candle falling upon her divining-rod with a quaint persistency that seemed to point to the stairs he was ascending. When he reached the first landing the rising wind through an open window put out his light, but, although

the staircase was in darkness, he could see the long corridor above illuminated by the moonlight throughout its whole length. He had nearly reached it when the slow but unmistakable rustle of a dress in the distance caught his ear. He paused, not only in the interest of delicacy, but with a sudden nervous thrill he could not account for. The rustle came nearer — he could hear the distinct frou-frou of satin; and then, to his bewildered eyes, what seemed to be the figure of the dummy, arrayed in the pale blue evening dress he knew so well, passed gracefully and majestically down the corridor. He could see the shapely folds of the skirt, the symmetry of the bodice, even the harmony of the trimmings. He raised his eyes, half affrightedly, prepared to see the headless shoulders, but they — and what seemed to be a head — were concealed in a floating "cloud" or nubia of some fleecy tissue, as if for protection from the evening air. He remained for an instant motionless, dazed by this apparent motion of an inanimate figure; but as the absurdity of the idea struck him he hurriedly but stealthily ascended the remaining stairs, resolved to follow it. But he was only in time to see it turn into the angle of another corridor, which, when he had reached it, was empty. The figure had vanished!

His first thought was to go to the committee room and examine the locked closet. But the key was in his desk at home, he had no light, and the room was on the other side of the house. Besides, he reflected that even the detection of the figure would involve the exposure of the very secret they had kept intact so long. He sought his bedroom, and went quietly to bed. But not to sleep; a curiosity more potent than any sense of the trespass done him kept him tossing half the night. Who was this woman whom the clothes fitted so well? He reviewed in his mind the guests in the house, but he knew none who could have carried off this masquerade so bravely.

In the morning early he made his way to the committee room, but as he approached was startled to observe two pairs of boots, a man's and a woman's, conjugally placed before its door. Now thoroughly indignant, he hurried to the office, and was confronted by the face of the fair secretary. She colored quickly on seeing him — but the reason was obvious.

"You are coming to scold me, sir! But it is not my fault. We were full yesterday afternoon when your friend from San Francisco came here with his wife. We told him those were *your* rooms, but he said he would make it right with you — and my father thought you would not be displeased for once. Everything of yours was put into another room, and the closet remains, locked as you left it."

Amazed and bewildered, the president could only mutter a vague apology and turn away. Had his friend's wife opened the door with another key in some fit of curiosity and disported herself in those clothes? If so, she *dare* not speak of her discovery.

An introduction to the lady at breakfast dispelled this faint hope. She was a plump woman, whose generous proportions could hardly have been confined in that pale blue bodice; she was frank and communicative, with no suggestion of mischievous concealment.

Nevertheless, he made a firm resolution. As soon as his friends left he called a meeting of the committee. He briefly informed them of the accidental occupation of the room, but for certain reasons of his own said nothing of his ghostly experience. But he put it to them plainly that no more risks must be run, and that he should remove the dresses and dummy to his own house. To his considerable surprise this suggestion was received with grave approval and a certain strange relief.

"We kinder thought of suggesting it to you before," said Mr. Trigg slowly, "and that mebbe we 've played this little

game long enough — for suthin 's happened that 's makin' it anything but funny. We 'd have told you before, but we dassent! Speak out, Clint, and tell the president what we saw the other night, and don't mince matters."

The president glanced quickly and warningly around him. "I thought," he said sternly, "that we 'd dropped all fooling. It 's no time for practical joking now!"

"Honest Injun — it 's gospel truth! Speak up, Clint!"

The president looked on the serious faces around him, and was himself slightly awed.

"It 's a matter of two or three nights ago," said Grey slowly, "that Trigg and I were passing through Sycamore Woods, just below the hotel. It was after twelve — bright moonlight, so that we could see everything as plain as day, and we were dead sober. Just as we passed under the sycamores, Trigg grabs my arm, and says, 'Hi!' I looked up, and there, not ten yards away, standing dead in the moonlight, was that dummy! She was all in white — that dress with the fairy frills, you know — and had, what 's more, *a head!* At least, something white all wrapped around it, and over her shoulders. At first we thought you or some of the boys had dressed her up and lifted her out there for a joke, and left her to frighten us! So we started forward, and then — it 's the gospel truth! — she *moved away*, gliding like the moonbeams, and vanished among the trees!"

"Did you see her face?" asked the president.

"No! you bet! I did n't try to — it would have haunted me forever."

"What do you mean?"

"This — I mean it was that *girl the box belonged to!* She 's dead somewhere — as you 'll find out sooner or later — *and has come back for her clothes!* I 've often heard of such things before."

Despite his coolness, at this corroboration of his own experience, and impressed by Grey's unmistakable awe, a

thrill went through the president. For an instant he was silent.

"That will do, boys," he said finally. "It 's a queer story; but remember, it 's all the more reason now for our keeping our secret. As for those things, I 'll remove them quietly and at once."

But he did not.

On the contrary, prolonging his stay at the hotel with plausible reasons, he managed frequently to visit the committee room or its vicinity, at different and unsuspected hours of the day and night. More than that, he found opportunities to visit the office, and under pretexts of business connected with the economy of the hotel management, informed himself through Miss Marsh on many points. A few of these details naturally happened to refer to herself, her prospects, her tastes, and education. He learned incidentally, what he had partly known, that her father had been in better circumstances, and that she had been gently nurtured — though of this she made little account in her pride in her own independence and devotion to her duties. But in his own persistent way he also made private notes of the breadth of her shoulders, the size of her waist, her height, length of her skirt, her movements in walking, and other apparently extraneous circumstances. It was natural that he acquired some supplemental facts, — that her eyes, under her eye-glasses, were a tender gray, and touched with the melancholy beauty of near-sightedness; that her face had a sensitive mobility beyond the mere charm of color, and like most people lacking this primitive and striking element of beauty, what was really fine about her escaped the first sight. As, for instance, it was only by bending over to examine her accounts that he found that her indistinctive hair was as delicate as floss silk, and as electrical. It was only by finding her romping with the children of a guest one evening that he was startled by the appalling fact

of her youth! But about this time he left the hotel and returned to his house.

On the first yearly anniversary of the great strike at Excelsior there were some changes in the settlement, notably the promotion of Mr. Marsh to a more important position in the company, and the installation of Miss Cassie Marsh as manageress of the hotel. As Miss Marsh read the official letter, signed by the president, conveying in complimentary but formal terms this testimony of their approval and confidence, her lip trembled slightly, and a tear trickling from her light lashes dimmed her eye-glasses, so that she was fain to go up to her room to recover herself alone. When she did so she was startled to find a wire dummy standing near the door, and neatly folded upon the bed two elegant dresses. A note in the president's own hand lay beside them. A swift blush stung her cheek as she read, —

DEAR MISS MARSH, — Will you make me happy by keeping the secret that no other woman but yourself knows, and by accepting the clothes that no other woman but yourself can wear?

The next moment, with the dresses over her arm and the ridiculous dummy swinging by its wires from her other hand, she was flying down the staircase to Committee Room No. 4. The door opened upon its sole occupant, the president.

"Oh, sir, how cruel of you!" she gasped. "It was only a joke of mine. . . . I always intended to tell you. . . . It was very foolish, but it seemed so funny. . . . You see, I thought it was . . . the dress you had bought for your future intended — some young lady you were going to marry!"

"It is!" said the president quietly, and he closed the door behind her.

And it was.

HOW I WENT TO THE MINES

I HAD been two years in California before I ever thought of going to the mines, and my initiation into the vocation of gold digging was partly compulsory. The little pioneer settlement school, of which I was the somewhat youthful and, I fear, the not over-competent master, was state-aided only to a limited extent; and as the bulk of its expense was borne by a few families in its vicinity, when two of them — representing perhaps a dozen children or pupils — one morning announced their intention of moving to a more prosperous and newer district, the school was incontinently closed.

In twenty-four hours I found myself destitute alike of my flock and my vocation. I am afraid I regretted the former the most. Some of the children I had made my companions and friends; and as I stood that bright May morning before the empty little bark-thatched schoolhouse in the wilderness, it was with an odd sensation that our little summer "play" at being schoolmaster and pupil was over. Indeed, I remember distinctly that a large hunk of gingerbread — a parting gift from a prize scholar a year older than myself — stood me in good stead in my future wanderings, for I was alone in the world at that moment and constitutionally improvident.

I had been frightfully extravagant even on my small income, spending much money on "boiled shirts," and giving as an excuse, which I since believe was untenable, that I ought to set an example in dress to my pupils. The result was that at this crucial moment I had only seven dollars in

my pocket, five of which went to the purchase of a second-hand revolver, that I felt was necessary to signalize my abandonment of a peaceful vocation for one of greed and adventure.

For I had finally resolved to go to the mines and become a gold-digger. Other occupations and my few friends in San Francisco were expensively distant. The nearest mining district was forty miles away; the nearest prospect of aid was the hope of finding a miner whom I had casually met in San Francisco, and whom I shall call "Jim." With only this name upon my lips I expected, like the deserted Eastern damsel in the ballad, to find my friend among the haunts of mining men. But my capital of two dollars would not allow the expense of stage-coach fare; I must walk to the mines, and I did.

I cannot clearly recall *how* I did it. The end of my first day's journey found me with blistered feet and the conviction that varnished leather shoes, however proper for the Master of Madrono Valley School in the exercise of his functions, were not suited to him when he was itinerant. Nevertheless, I clung to them as the last badge of my former life, carrying them in my hands when pain and pride made me at last forsake the frequented highway to travel barefooted in the trails.

I am afraid that my whole equipment was rather incongruous, and I remember that the few travelers I met on the road glanced at me with curiosity and some amusement. The odds and ends of my "pack" — a faded morocco dressing-case, an early gift from my mother, and a silver-handled riding-whip, also a gift — in juxtaposition with my badly rolled, coarse blue blanket and tin coffee-pot, were sufficiently provocative. My revolver, too, which would not swing properly in its holster from my hip, but worked around until it hung down in front like a Highlander's dirk, gave me considerable mortification.

A sense of pride, which kept me from arriving at my friend's cabin utterly penniless, forbade my seeking shelter and food at a wayside station. I ate the remainder of my gingerbread, and camped out in the woods. To preclude any unnecessary sympathy, I may add that I was not at all hungry and had no sense of privation.

The loneliness that had once or twice come over me in meeting strangers on the traveled road, with whom I was too shy and proud to converse, vanished utterly in the sweet and silent companionship of the woods. I believe I should have felt my solitary vagabond condition greater in a strange hostelry or a crowded cabin. I heard the soft breathings of the lower life in the grass and ferns around me, saw the grave, sleepy stars above my head, and slept soundly, quite forgetting the pain of my blistered feet, or the handkerchiefs I had sacrificed for bandages.

In the morning, finding that I had emptied my water flask, I also found that I had utterly overlooked the first provision of camping, — nearness to a water supply, — and was fain to chew some unboiled coffee grains to flavor my scant breakfast, when I again took the trail.

I kept out of the main road as much as possible that day, although my détours cost me some extra walking, and by this time my bandaged feet had accumulated so much of the red dust that I suppose it would have been difficult to say what I wore on them. But in these excursions the balsamic air of the pines always revived me; the reassuring changes of scenery and distance viewed from those mountain ridges, the most wonderful I had ever seen, kept me in a state of excitement, and there was an occasional novelty of "outcrop" in the rocky trail that thrilled me with mysterious anticipation.

For this outcrop — a strange, white, porcelain-like rock, glinting like a tooth thrust through the red soil — was *quartz*, which I had been told indicated the vicinity of the

gold-bearing district. Following these immaculate finger-posts, I came at about sunset upon a mile-long slope of pines still baking in the western glare, and beyond it, across an unfathomable abyss, a shelf in the opposite mountain side, covered with white tents, looking not unlike the quartz outcrop I have spoken of. It was "the diggings"!

I do not know what I had expected, but I was conscious of some bitter disappointment. As I gazed, the sun sank below the serried summit of the slope on which I stood; a great shadow seemed to steal *up* rather than down the mountain, the tented shelf faded away, and a score of tiny diamond points of light, like stars, took its place. A cold wind rushed down the mountain side, and I shivered in my thin clothes, drenched with the sweat of my day-long tramp.

It was nine o'clock when I reached the mining camp, itself only a fringe of the larger settlement beyond, and I had been on my feet since sunrise. Nevertheless, I halted at the outskirts, deposited my pack in the bushes, bathed my feet in a sluice of running water, so stained with the soil that it seemed to run blood, and, putting on my dreadful varnished shoes again, limped once more into respectability and the first cabin.

Here I found that my friend "Jim" was one of four partners on the "Gum Tree" claim, two miles on the other side of the settlement. There was nothing left for me but to push on to the "Magnolia Hotel," procure the cheapest refreshment and an hour's rest, and then limp as best I could to the "Gum Tree" claim.

I found the "Magnolia" a large wooden building, given over, in greater part, to an enormous drinking "saloon," filled with flashing mirrors and a mahogany bar. In the unimportant and stuffy little dining-room or restaurant, I selected some "fish-balls and coffee," I think more with a view to cheapness and expedition than for their absolute sustaining power. The waiter informed me that it was pos-

sible that my friend "Jim" might be in the settlement, but that the barkeeper, who knew everything and everybody, could tell me or give me "the shortest cut to the claim."

From sheer fatigue I lingered at my meal, I fear, long past any decent limit, and then reëntered the bar-room. It was crowded with miners and traders and a few smartly dressed professional-looking men. Here again my vanity led me into extravagance. I could not bear to address the important, white-shirt-sleeved and diamond-pinned barkeeper as a mere boyish suppliant for information. I was silly enough to demand a drink, and laid down, alas! another quarter.

I had asked my question, the barkeeper had handed me the decanter, and I had poured out the stuff with as much ease and grown-up confidence as I could assume, when a singular incident occurred. As it had some bearing upon my fortune, I may relate it here.

The ceiling of the saloon was supported by a half-dozen wooden columns, about eighteen inches square, standing in a line, parallel with the counter of the bar and about two feet from it. The front of the bar was crowded with customers, when suddenly, to my astonishment, they one and all put down their glasses and hurriedly backed into the spaces between the columns. At the same moment a shot was fired from the street through the large open doors that stood at right angles with the front of the counter and the columns.

The bullet raked and splintered the mouldings of the counter front, but with no other damage. The shot was returned from the upper end of the bar, and then for the first time I became aware that two men with leveled revolvers were shooting at each other through the saloon.

The bystanders in range were fully protected by the wooden columns; the barkeeper had "ducked" below the

counter at the first shot. Six shots were exchanged by the duelists, but, as far as I could see, nobody was hurt. A mirror was smashed, and my glass had part of its rim carried cleanly away by the third shot and its contents spilt.

I had remained standing near the counter, and I presume I may have been protected by the columns. But the whole thing passed so quickly, and I was so utterly absorbed in its dramatic novelty, that I cannot recall having the slightest sensation of physical fear; indeed, I had been much more frightened in positions of less peril.

My only concern, and this was paramount, was that I might betray by any word or movement my youthfulness, astonishment, or unfamiliarity with such an experience. I think that any shy, vain schoolboy will understand this, and would probably feel as I did. So strong was this feeling, that while the sting of gunpowder was still in my nostrils I moved towards the bar, and, taking up my broken glass, said to the barkeeper, perhaps somewhat slowly and diffidently, —

"Will you please fill me another glass? It 's not my fault if this was broken."

The barkeeper, rising flushed and excited from behind the bar, looked at me with a queer smile, and then passed the decanter and a fresh glass. I heard a laugh and an oath behind me, and my cheeks flushed as I took a single gulp of the fiery spirit and hurried away.

But my blistered feet gave me a twinge of pain, and I limped on the threshold. I felt a hand on my shoulder, and a voice said quickly: "You ain't hurt, old man?" I recognized the voice of the man who had laughed, and responded quickly, growing more hot and scarlet, that my feet were blistered by a long walk, and that I was in a hurry to go to "Gum Tree Claim."

"Hold on," said the stranger. Preceding me to the street, he called to a man sitting in a buggy, "Drop him."

pointing to me, "at Gum Tree Claim, and then come back here," helped me into the vehicle, clapped his hand on my shoulder, said to me enigmatically, "You 'll do!" and quickly reëntered the saloon.

It was from the driver only that I learned, during the drive, that the two combatants had quarreled a week before, had sworn to shoot each other "on sight," *i. e.*, on their first accidental meeting, and that each "went armed." He added, disgustedly, that it was "mighty bad shooting," to which I, in my very innocence of these lethal weapons, and truthfulness to my youthful impressions, agreed!

I said nothing else of my own feelings, and, indeed, soon forgot them; for I was nearing the end of my journey, and *now*, for the first time, although I believe it a common experience of youth, I began to feel a doubt of the wisdom of my intentions. During my long tramp, and in the midst of my privations, I had never doubted it; but now, as I neared "Jim's" cabin, my youthfulness and inefficiency and the extravagance of my quest of a mere acquaintance for aid and counsel came to me like a shock. But it was followed by a greater one. When at last I took leave of my driver and entered the humble little log cabin of the "Gum Tree Company," I was informed that "Jim" only a few days before had given up his partnership and gone to San Francisco.

Perhaps there was something in my appearance that showed my weariness and disappointment, for one of the partners dragged out the only chair in the cabin, — he and the other partners had been sitting on boxes tilted on end, — and offered it to me, with the inevitable drink. With this encouragement, I stammered out my story. I think I told the exact truth. I was too weary to even magnify my acquaintance with the absent "Jim."

They listened without comment. I dare say they had heard the story before. I am quite convinced they had each

gone through a harder experience than mine. Then occurred what I believe could have occurred only in California in that age of simplicity and confidence. Without a word of discussion among themselves, without a word of inquiry as to myself, my character or prospects, they offered me the vacant partnership "to try."

In any event I was to stay there until I could make up my mind. As I was scarcely able to stand, one of them volunteered to fetch my pack from its "cache" in the bushes four miles away; and then, to my astonishment, conversation instantly turned upon other topics, — literature, science, philosophy, everything but business and practical concerns. Two of the partners were graduates of a Southern college and the other a bright young farmer.

I went to bed that night in the absent Jim's bunk, one fourth owner of a cabin and a claim I knew nothing of. As I looked about me at the bearded faces of my new partners, although they were all apparently only a few years older than myself, I wondered if we were not "playing" at being partners in "Gum Tree Claim," as I had played at being schoolmaster in Madrono Valley.

When I awoke late the next morning and stared around the empty cabin, I could scarcely believe that the events of the preceding night were not a dream. My pack, which I had left four miles away, lay at my feet. By the truthful light of day I could see that I was lying apparently in a parallelogram of untrimmed logs, between whose interstices, here and there, the glittering sunlight streamed.

A roof of bark thatch, on which a woodpecker was foolishly experimenting, was above my head; four wooden "bunks," like a ship's berth, were around the two sides of the room; a table, a chair, and three stools, fashioned from old packing-boxes, were the only furniture. The cabin was lighted by a window of two panes let into one gable, by the open door, and by a chimney of adobe, that entirely filled

the other gable, and projected scarcely a foot above the apex of the roof.

I was wondering whether I had not strayed into a deserted cabin, a dreadful suspicion of the potency of the single drink I had taken in the saloon coming over me, when my three partners entered. Their explanation was brief. I had needed rest, they had delicately forborne to awaken me before. It was twelve o'clock! My breakfast was ready. They had something "funny" to tell me! I was a hero!

My conduct during the shooting affray at the "Magnolia" had been discussed, elaborately exaggerated, and interpreted, by eye-witnesses; the latest version being that I had calmly stood at the bar, coolly demanding to be served by the crouching barkeeper, while the shots were being fired! I am afraid even my new friends put down my indignant disclaimer to youthful bashfulness, but seeing that I was distressed, they changed the subject.

Yes! I might, if I wanted, do some "prospecting" that day. Where? Oh, anywhere on ground not already claimed; there were hundreds of square miles to choose from. What was I to do? What! was it possible I had never prospected before? No! Nor dug gold at all? Never!

I saw them glance hurriedly at each other; my heart sank, until I noticed that their eyes were eager and sparkling! Then I learned that my ignorance was blessed! Gold miners were very superstitious; it was one of their firm beliefs that "luck" would inevitably follow the *first* essay of the neophyte or "greenhorn." This was called "nigger luck;" *i. e.*, the inexplicable good fortune of the inferior and incompetent. It was not very complimentary to myself, but in my eagerness to show my gratitude to my new partners I accepted it.

I dressed hastily, and swallowed my breakfast of coffee, salt pork, and "flapjacks." A pair of old deerskin mocca-

sins, borrowed from a squaw who did the camp washing, was a luxury to my blistered feet; and equipped with a pick, a long-handled shovel, and a prospecting pan, I demanded to be led at once to my field of exploit. But I was told that this was impossible; I must find it myself, alone, or the charm would be broken!

I fixed upon a grassy slope, about two hundred yards from the cabin, and limped thither. The slope faced the magnificent cañon and the prospect I had seen the day before from the further summit. In my vivid recollection of that eventful morning I quite distinctly remember that I was, nevertheless, so entranced with the exterior "prospect" that for some moments I forgot the one in the ground at my feet. Then I began to dig.

My instructions were to fill my pan with the dirt taken from as large an area as possible near the surface. In doing this I was sorely tempted to dig lower in search of more hidden treasure, and in one or two deeper strokes of my pick I unearthed a bit of quartz with little seams or veins that glittered promisingly. I put them hopefully in my pocket, but duly filled my pan. This I took, not without some difficulty, owing to its absurd weight, to the nearest sluice-box, and, as instructed, tilted my pan in the running water.

As I rocked it from side to side, in a surprisingly short time the lighter soil of deep red color was completely washed away, leaving a glutinous clayey pudding mixed with small stones, like plums. Indeed, there was a fascinating reminiscence of "dirt pies" in this boyish performance. The mud, however, soon yielded to the flowing water, and left only the stones and "black sand." I removed the former with my fingers, retaining only a small, flat, pretty, disk-like stone, heavier than the others, — it looked like a blackened coin, — and this I put in my pocket with the quartz. Then I proceeded to wash away the black sand.

I must leave my youthful readers to imagine my sensa-

tions when at last I saw a dozen tiny star-points of gold adhering to the bottom of the pan! They were so small that I was fearful of washing further, lest they should wash away. It was not until later that I found that their specific gravity made that almost impossible. I ran joyfully to where my partners were at work, holding out my pan.

"Yes, he 's got the color," said one blandly. "I knew it."

I was disappointed. "Then I have n't struck it?" I said hesitatingly.

"Not in *this* pan. You 've got about a quarter of a dollar here."

My face fell. "But," he continued smilingly, "you 've only to get that amount in four pans, and you 've made your daily 'grub.'"

"And that 's all," added the other, "that we, or indeed *any one* on this hill, have made for the last six months!"

This was another shock to me. But I do not know whether I was as much impressed by it as by the perfect good humor and youthful unconcern with which it was uttered. Still, I was disappointed in my first effort. I hesitatingly drew the two bits of quartz from my pocket.

"I found them," I said. "They look as if they had some metal in them. See how it sparkles."

My partner smiled. "Iron pyrites," he said; "but what 's that?" he added quickly, taking the little disk-like stone from my hand. "Where did you get this?"

"In the same hole. Is it good for anything?"

He did not reply to me, but turned to his two other partners, who had eagerly pressed around him. "Look!"

He laid the fragment on another stone, and gave it a smart blow with the point of his pick. To my astonishment it did not crumble or break, but showed a little dent from the pick point that was bright yellow!

I had no time, nor indeed need, to ask another question.

"Run for your barrow!" he said to one. "Write out a 'Notice,' and bring the stakes," to the other; and the next moment, forgetful of my blistered feet, we were flying over to the slope. A claim was staked out, the "Notice" put up, and we all fell to work to load up our wheelbarrow. We carried four loads to the sluice-boxes before we began to wash.

The nugget I had picked up was worth about twelve dollars. We carried many loads; we worked that day and the next, hopefully, cheerfully, and without weariness. Then we worked at the claim daily, dutifully, and regularly for three weeks. We sometimes got "the color," we sometimes did n't, but we nearly always got enough for our daily "grub." We laughed, joked, told stories, "spouted poetry," and enjoyed ourselves as in a perpetual picnic. But that twelve-dollar nugget was the first and last "strike" we made on the new "Tenderfoot" Claim!

CONDENSED NOVELS

NEW BURLESQUES

RUPERT THE RESEMBLER

BY A–TH–Y H–PE

CHAPTER I

RUPERT OF TRULYRURALANIA

WHEN I state that I was own brother to Lord Burleydon, had an income of two thousand a year, could speak all the polite languages fluently, was a powerful swordsman, a good shot, and could ride anything from an elephant to a clothes-horse, I really think I have said enough to satisfy any feminine novel-reader of Bayswater or South Kensington that I was a hero. My brother's wife, however, did not seem to incline to this belief.

"A more conceited, self-satisfied little cad I never met than you," she said. "Why don't you try to do something instead of sneering at others who do? You never take anything seriously — except yourself, which is n't worth it. You are proud of your red hair and peaked nose just because you fondly believe that you got them from the Prince of Trulyruralania, and are willing to think evil of your ancestress to satisfy your snobbish little soul. Let me tell you, sir, that there was no more truth about that than there was in that silly talk of her partiality for her husband's red-haired gamekeeper in Scotland. Ah! that makes you start — don't it? But I have always observed

that a mule is apt to remember only the horse side of his ancestry!"

Whenever my pretty sister-in-law talks in this way I always try to forget that she came of a family far inferior to our own, the Razorbills. Indeed, her people — of the Nonconformist stock — really had nothing but wealth and rectitude, and I think my brother Bob, in his genuine love for her, was willing to overlook the latter for the sake of the former.

My pretty sister-in-law's interest in my affairs always made me believe that she secretly worshiped me — although it was a fact, as will be seen in the progress of this story, that most women blushed on my addressing them. I used to say it "was the reflection of my red hair on a transparent complexion," which was rather neat — was n't it? And subtle? But then, I was always saying such subtle things.

"My dear Rose," I said, laying down my egg spoon (the egg spoon really had nothing to do with this speech, but it imparted such a delightfully realistic flavor to the scene), "I'm not to blame if I resemble the S'helpburgs."

"It 's your being so beastly proud of it that I object to!" she replied. "And for Heaven's sake, try to *be* something, and not merely resemble things! The fact is you resemble too much — you 're *always* resembling. You resemble a man of fashion, and you 're not; a wit, and you 're not; a soldier, a sportsman, a hero — and you 're none of 'em. Altogether, you 're not in the least convincing. Now, listen! There 's a good chance for you to go as our *attaché* with Lord Mumblepeg, the new Ambassador to Cochin China. In all the novels, you know, *attachés* are always the confidants of Grand Duchesses, and know more state secrets than their chiefs; in real life, I believe they are something like a city clerk with a leaning to private theatricals. Say you 'll go! Do!"

"I 'll take a few months' holiday, first," I replied, "and then," I added in my gay, dashing way, "if the place is open — hang it if I don't go!"

"Good old bounder!" she said, "and don't think too much of that precious Prince Rupert. He was a bad lot."

She blushed again at me — as her husband entered.

"Take Rose's advice, Rupert, my boy," he said, "and go!"

And that is how I came to go to Trulyruralania. For I secretly resolved to take my holiday in traveling in that country and trying, as dear Lady Burleydon put it, really to be somebody, instead of resembling anybody in particular. A precious lot *she* knew about it!

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MY HAIR CAUSES A LOT OF THINGS

You go to Trulyruralania from Charing Cross. In passing through Paris we picked up Mlle. Beljambe, who was going to Köhlslau, the capital of Trulyruralania, to marry the Grand Duke Michael, who, however, as I was informed, was in love with the Princess Flirtia. She blushed on seeing me — but, I was told afterwards, declined being introduced to me on any account. However, I thought nothing of this, and went on to Bock, the next station to Köhlslau. At the little inn in the forest I was informed I was just in time to see the coronation of the new king the next day. The landlady and her daughter were very communicative, and, after the fashion of the simple, guileless stage peasant, instantly informed me what everybody was doing, and at once explained the situation. She told me that the Grand Duke Michael — or Black Michael as he was called — himself aspired to the throne, as well as to the hand of the Princess Flirtia, but was hated by the populace, who pre-

ferred the young heir, Prince Rupert; because he had the hair and features of the dynasty of the S'helpburgs, "which," she added, "are singularly like your own."

"But is red hair so very peculiar here?" I asked.

"Among the Jews — yes, sire! I mean yes, *sir*," she corrected herself. "You seldom see a red-headed Jew."

"The Jews!" I repeated in astonishment.

"Of course you know the S'helpburgs are descended directly from Solomon — and have indeed some of his matrimonial peculiarities," she said, blushing.

I was amazed — but recalled myself. "But why do they call the Duke of Köhlslau *Black Michael?*" I asked carelessly.

"Because he is nearly black, sir. You see, when the great Prince Rupert went abroad in the old time he visited England, Scotland, and Africa. They say he married an African lady there — and that the Duke is really more in the direct line of succession than Prince Rupert."

But here the daughter showed me to my room. She blushed, of course, and apologized for not bringing a candle, as she thought my hair was sufficiently illuminating. "But," she added with another blush, "I do *so* like it."

I replied by giving her something of no value, — a Belgian nickel which would n't pass in Bock, as I had found to my cost. But my hair had evidently attracted attention from others, for on my return to the guest-room a stranger approached me, and in the purest and most precise German — the Court or 'Olland Hof speech — addressed me: —

"Have you the red hair of the fair King or the hair of your father?"

Luckily I was able to reply with the same purity and precision: "I have both the hair of the fair King and my own. But I have not the hair of my father nor of Black Michael, nor of the innkeeper nor the innkeeper's wife. The red *heir* of the fair King would be a son."

Possibly this delicate *mot* on the approaching marriage of the King was lost in the translation, for the stranger strode abruptly away. I learned, however, that the King was actually then in Bock, at the castle a few miles distant, in the woods. I resolved to stroll thither.

It was a fine old mediæval structure. But as the singular incidents I am about to relate combine the romantic and adventurous atmosphere of the middle ages with all the appliances of modern times, I may briefly state that the castle was lit by electricity, had fire-escapes on each of the turrets, four lifts, and was fitted up by one of the best West End establishments. The sanitary arrangements were excellent, and the drainage of the most perfect order, as I had reason to know personally later. I was so affected by the peaceful solitude that I lay down under a tree and presently fell asleep. I was awakened by the sound of voices, and, looking up, beheld two men bending over me. One was a grizzled veteran and the other a younger dandyfied man; both were dressed in shooting suits.

"Never saw such a resemblance before in all my life," said the elder man. "'Pon my soul! if the King had n't got shaved yesterday because the Princess Flirtia said his beard tickled her, I 'd swear it was he!"

I could not help thinking how lucky it was — for this narrative — that the King *had* shaved, otherwise my story would have degenerated into a mere Comedy of Errors. Opening my eyes, I said boldly: —

"Now that you are satisfied whom I resemble, gentlemen, perhaps you will tell me who you are?"

"Certainly," said the elder curtly. "I am Spitz — a simple colonel of his Majesty's, yet, nevertheless, the one man who runs this whole dynasty — and this young gentleman is Fritz, my lieutenant. And you are" —

"My name is Razorbill — brother to Lord Burleydon," I replied calmly.

"Good heavens! another of the lot!" he muttered. Then, correcting himself, he said brusquely: "Any relation to that Englishwoman who was so sweet on the old Rupert centuries ago?"

Here, again, I suppose my sister-in-law would have had me knock down the foreign insulter of my English ancestress — but I colored to the roots of my hair, and even farther — with pleasure at this proof of my royal descent! And then a cheery voice was heard calling "Spitz!" and "Fritz!" through the woods.

"The King!" said Spitz to Fritz quickly. "He must not see him."

"Too late," said Fritz, as a young man bounded lightly out of the bushes.

I was thunderstruck! It was as if I had suddenly been confronted with a mirror — and beheld myself! Of course he was not quite so good-looking, or so tall, but he was still a colorable imitation! I was delighted.

Nevertheless, for a moment he did not seem to reciprocate my feeling. He stared at me, staggered back and passed his hand across his forehead. "Can it be," he muttered thickly, "that I've got 'em ag'in? Yet I only had — shingle glash!"

But Fritz quickly interposed.

"Your Majesty is all right — though," he added in a lower voice, "let this be a warning to you for to-morrow! This gentleman is Mr. Razorbill — you know the old story of the Razorbills? — Ha! ha!"

But the King did not laugh; he extended his hand and said gently, "You are welcome — my cousin!" Indeed, my sister-in-law would have probably said that — dissipated though he was — he was the only gentleman there.

"I have come to see the coronation, your Majesty," I said.

"And you shall," said the King heartily, "and shall go with us! The show can't begin without us — eh, Spitz?" he added playfully, poking the veteran in the ribs, "whatever Michael may do!"

Then he linked his arms in Spitz's and mine. "Let 's go to the hut — and have some supper and fizz," he said gayly.

We went to the hut. We had supper. We ate and drank heavily. We danced madly around the table. Nevertheless I thought that Spitz and Fritz were worried by the King's potations, and Spitz at last went so far as to remind his Majesty that they were to start early in the morning for Köhlslau. I noticed also that as the King drank his speech grew thicker and Spitz and Fritz exchanged glances. At last Spitz said with stern significance: —

"Your Majesty has not forgotten the test invariably submitted to the King at his coronation?"

"Shertenly not," replied the King, with his reckless laugh. "The King mush be able to pronounsh — name of his country — intel-lillil-gibly: mush shay (hic!): 'I 'm King of — King of — Too-too-tooral-looral-anyer.'" He staggered, laughed, and fell under the table.

"He cannot say it!" gasped Fritz and Spitz in one voice. "He is lost!"

"Unless," said Fritz suddenly, pointing at me with a flash of intelligence, "*he* can personate him, and say it. Can you?" he turned to me brusquely.

It was an awful moment. I had been drinking heavily too, but I resolved to succeed. "I 'm King of Trooly-rooly" — I murmured; but I could not master it — I staggered and followed the King under the table.

"Is there no one here," roared Spitz, "who can shave thish dynasty, and shay 'Tooral' — No! —— it! I mean 'Trularlooral'" — but he, too, lurched hopelessly forward.

"No one can say 'Tooral-looral'" — muttered Fritz;

and, grasping Spitz in despair, they both rolled under the table.

How long we lay there Heaven knows! I was awakened by Spitz playing the garden hose on me. He was booted and spurred, with Fritz by his side. The King was lying on a bench, saying feebly: "Blesh you, my chillen."

"By politely acceding to Black Michael's request to 'try our one-and-six sherry,' he has been brought to this condition," said Spitz bitterly. "It 's a trick to keep him from being crowned. In this country if the King is crowned while drunk, the kingdom instantly reverts to a villain — no matter who. But in this case the villain is Black Michael. Ha! What say you, lad? Shall we frustrate the rascal, by having *you* personate the King?"

I was — well! — intoxicated at the thought! But what would my sister-in-law say? Would she — in her Nonconformist conscience — consider it strictly honorable? But I swept all scruples aside. A King was to be saved! "I will go," I said. "Let us on to Köhlslau — riding like the wind!" We rode like the wind, furiously, madly. Mounted on a wild, dashing bay — known familiarly as the "Bay of Biscay" from its rough turbulence — I easily kept the lead. But our horses began to fail. Suddenly Spitz halted, clapped his hand to his head, and threw himself from his horse. "Fools!" he said, "we should have taken the train! It will get there an hour before we will!" He pointed to a wayside station where the 7.15 excursion train for Köhlslau was waiting.

"But how dreadfully unmediæval! What will the public say?" I began.

"Bother the public!" he said gruffly. "Who 's running this dynasty — you or I? Come!" With the assistance of Fritz he tied up my face with a handkerchief to simulate toothache, and then, with a shout of defiance, we three rushed madly into a closely packed third-class carriage.

Never shall I forget the perils, the fatigue, the hopes and fears of that mad journey. Panting, perspiring, packed together with cheap trippers, but exalted with the one hope of saving the King, we at last staggered out on the Köhlslau platform utterly exhausted. As we did so we heard a distant roar from the city. Fritz turned an ashen gray, Spitz a livid blue. "Are we too late?" he gasped, as we madly fought our way into the street, where shouts of "The King! The King!" were rending the air. "Can it be Black Michael?" But here the crowd parted, and a procession, preceded by outriders, flashed into the square. And there, seated in a carriage beside the most beautiful red-haired girl I had ever seen, was the King, — the King whom we had left two hours ago, dead drunk in the hut in the forest!

CHAPTERS III TO XXII (Inclusive)

IN WHICH THINGS GET MIXED

We reeled against each other aghast! Spitz recovered himself first. "We must fly!" he said hoarsely. "If the King has discovered our trick — we are lost!"

"But where shall we go?" I asked.

"Back to the hut."

We caught the next train to Bock. An hour later we stood panting within the hut. Its walls and ceiling were splashed with sinister red stains. "Blood!" I exclaimed joyfully. "At last we have a real mediæval adventure!"

"It 's Burgundy, you fool," growled Spitz; "good Burgundy wasted!" At this moment Fritz appeared dragging in the hut-keeper.

"Where is the King?" demanded Spitz fiercely of the trembling peasant.

"He was carried away an hour ago by Black Michael and taken to the castle."

"And when did he *leave* the castle?" roared Spitz.

"He never left the castle, sir, and, alas! I fear never will, alive!" replied the man shuddering.

We stared at each other! Spitz bit his grizzled mustache. "So," he said bitterly, "Black Michael has simply anticipated us with the same game! We have been tricked. I knew it could not be the King whom they crowned! No!" he added quickly, "I see it all — it was Rupert of Glasgow!"

"Who is Rupert of Glasgow?" I cried.

"Oh, I really can't go over all that family rot again," grunted Spitz. "Tell him, Fritz."

Then, taking me aside, Fritz delicately informed me that Rupert of Glasgow — a young Scotchman — claimed equally with myself descent from the old Rupert, and that equally with myself he resembled the King. That Michael had got possession of him on his arrival in the country, kept him closely guarded in the castle, and had hid his resemblance in a black wig and false mustache; that the young Scotchman, however, seemed apparently devoted to Michael and his plots; and there was undoubtedly some secret understanding between them. That it was evidently Michael's trick to have the pretender crowned, and then, by exposing the fraud and the condition of the real King, excite the indignation of the duped people, and seat himself on the throne! "But," I burst out, "shall this base-born pretender remain at Köhlslau beside the beautiful Princess Flirtia? Let us to Köhlslau at once and hurl him from the throne!"

"One pretender is as good as another," said Spitz dryly. "But leave *him* to me. 'T is the King we must protect and succor! As for that Scotch springald, before midnight I shall have him kidnaped, brought back to his master in a close carriage, and you — *you* shall take his place at Köhlslau."

"I will," I said enthusiastically, drawing my sword; "but I have done nothing yet. Please let me kill something!"

"Aye, lad!" said Spitz, with a grim smile at my enthusiasm. "There 's a sheep in your path. Go out and cleave it to the saddle. And bring the saddle home!"

My sister-in-law might have thought me cruel — but I did it.

CHAP XXIII AND SOME OTHER CHAPS

I know not how it was compassed, but that night Rupert of Glasgow was left bound and gagged against the door of the castle, and the night-bell pulled. And that night I was seated on the throne of the S'helpburgs. As I gazed at the Princess Flirtia, glowing in the characteristic beauty of the S'helpburgs, and admired her striking profile, I murmured softly and half audibly: "Her nose is as a tower that looketh toward Damascus."

She looked puzzled, and knitted her pretty brows. "Is that poetry?" she asked.

"No," I said promptly. "It 's only part of a song of our great Ancestor." As she blushed slightly, I playfully flung around her fair neck the jeweled collar of the Order of the S'helpburgs — three golden spheres pendant, quartered from the arms of Lombardy — with the ancient Syriac motto, *El Ess Dee.*

She toyed with it a moment, and then said softly: "You have changed, Rupert. Do ye no ken hoo?"

I looked at her — as surprised at her dialect as at the imputation.

"You don't talk that way, as you did. And you don't say, 'It *will* be twelve o'clock,' when you mean, 'It *is* twelve o'clock,' nor 'I will be going out,' when you mean 'I *am.*' And you did n't say, 'Eh, sirs!' or 'Eh, mon,'

to any of the Court — nor 'Hoot awa!' nor any of those things. And," she added with a divine little pout, "you have n't told me I was 'sonsie' or 'bonnie' once."

I could with difficulty restrain myself. Rage, indignation, and jealousy filled my heart almost to bursting. I understood it all; that rascally Scotchman had made the most of his time, and dared to get ahead of me! I did not mind being taken for the King, but to be confounded with this infernal descendant of a gamekeeper — was too much. Yet with a superhuman effort I remained calm — and even smiled.

"You are not well?" said the Princess earnestly. "I thought you were taking too much of the Strasbourg pie at supper! And you are not going, surely — so soon?" she added, as I rose.

"I must go at once," I said. "I have forgotten some important business at Bock."

"Not boar hunting again?" she said poutingly.

"No, I 'm hunting a red dear," I said with that playful subtlety which would make her take it as a personal compliment, though I was only thinking of that imposter, and longing to get at him, as I bowed and withdrew.

In another hour I was before Black Michael's castle at Bock. These are lightning changes, I know — and the sovereignty of Trulyruralania *was* somewhat itinerant — but when a kingdom and a beautiful Princess are at stake, what are you to do? Fritz had begged me to take him along, but I arranged that he should come later, and go up unostentatiously in the lift. I was going by way of the moat. I was to succor the King, but I fear my real object was to get at Rupert of Glasgow.

I had noticed the day before that a large outside drain pipe, decreed by the Bock County Council, ran from the moat to the third floor of the donjon keep. I surmised that the King was imprisoned on that floor. Examining

the pipe closely, I saw that it was really a pneumatic dispatch tube, for secretly conveying letters and dispatches from the castle through the moat beyond the castle walls. Its extraordinary size, however, gave me the horrible conviction that it was to be used to convey the dead body of the King to the moat. I grew cold with horror — but I was determined.

I crept up the pipe. As I expected, it opened funnel-wise into a room where the poor King was playing poker with Black Michael. It took me but a moment to dash through the window into the room, push the King aside, gag and bind Black Michael, and lower him by a stout rope into the pipe he had destined for another. Having him in my power, I lowered him until I heard his body splash in the water in the lower part of the pipe. Then I proceeded to draw him up again, intending to question him in regard to Rupert of Glasgow. But this was difficult, as his saturated clothing made him fit the smooth pipe closely. At last I had him partly up, when I was amazed at a rush of water from the pipe which flooded the room. I dropped him and pulled him up again with the same result. Then in a flash I saw it all. His body, acting like a piston in the pipe, had converted it into a powerful pump. Mad with joy, I rapidly lowered and pulled him up again and again, until the castle was flooded — and the moat completely drained! I had created the diversion I wished; the tenants of the castle were disorganized and bewildered in trying to escape from the deluge, and the moat was accessible to my friends. Placing the poor King on a table to be out of the water, and tying up his head in my handkerchief to disguise him from Michael's guards, I drew my sword and plunged downstairs with the cataract in search of the miscreant Rupert. I reached the drawbridge, when I heard the sounds of tumult and was twice fired at,— once, as I have since learned, by my friends, under the impres-

sion that I was the escaping Rupert of Glasgow, and once by Black Michael's myrmidons, under the belief that I was the King. I was struck by the fact that these resemblances were confusing and unfortunate! At this moment, however, I caught sight of a kilted figure leaping from a lower window into the moat. Some instinct impelled me to follow it. It rapidly crossed the moat and plunged into the forest, with me in pursuit. I gained upon it; suddenly it turned, and I found myself again confronted with *myself* — and apparently the King! But that very resemblance made me recognize the Scotch pretender, Rupert of Glasgow. Yet he would have been called a "braw laddie," and his handsome face showed a laughing good humor, even while he opposed me, claymore in hand.

"Bide a wee, Maister Rupert Razorbill," he said lightly, lowering his sword, "before we slit ane anither's weasands. I 'm no claimin' any descent frae kings, and I 'm no acceptin' any auld wife's clavers against my women forbears, as ye are! I 'm just paid gude honest siller by Black Michael for the using of ma face and figure — sic time as his Majesty is tae worse frae trink! And I 'm commeesioned frae Michael to ask ye what price *ye* would take to join me in performing these duties — turn and turn aboot. Eh, laddie — but he would pay ye mair than that daft beggar, Spitz."

Rage and disgust overpowered me. "And *this* is my answer," I said, rushing upon him.

I have said earlier in these pages that I was a "strong" swordsman. In point of fact, I had carefully studied in the transpontine theatres that form of melodramatic mediæval sword-play known as "two up and two down." To my disgust, however, this wretched Scotchman did not seem to understand it, but in a twinkling sent my sword flying over my head. Before I could recover it, he had mounted a horse ready saddled in the wood, and, shouting to me

that he would take my "compleements" to the Princess, galloped away. Even then I would have pursued him afoot, but, hearing shouts behind me, I turned as Spitz and Fritz rode up.

"Has the King escaped to Köhlslau?" asked Fritz, staring at me.

"No," I said, "but Rupert of Glasgow" —

"Rupert of Glasgow!" growled Spitz. "We 've settled him! He 's gagged and bound and is now on his way to the frontier in a close carriage."

"Rupert — on his way to the frontier?" I gasped.

"Yes. Two of my men found him, disguised with a handkerchief over his face, trying to escape from the castle. And while we were looking for the King, whom we supposed was with you, they have sent the rascally Scotchman home."

"Fool!" I gasped. "Rupert of Glasgow has just left me! *You have deported your own King.*" And overcome by my superhuman exertions, I sank unconscious to the ground.

When I came to, I found myself in a *wagon lit*, speeding beyond the Trulyruralania frontier. On my berth was lying a missive with the seal of the S'helpburgs. Tearing it open I recognized the handwriting of the Princess Flirtia.

My dear Rupert, — Owing to the confusion that arises from there being so many of you, I have concluded to accept the hand of the Duke Michael. I may not become a Queen, but I shall bring rest to my country, and Michael assures me in his playful manner that "three of a kind," "even of the same color," do not always win at poker. It will tranquilize you somewhat to know that the Lord Chancellor assures me that on examining the records of the dynasty he finds that my ancestor Rupert never left his kingdom during his entire reign, and that consequently

your ancestress has been grossly maligned. I am sending typewritten copies of this to Rupert of Glasgow and the King. Farewell.

FLIRTIA.

Once a year, at Christmastide, I receive a simple foreign hamper *via* Charing Cross, marked "Return empty." I take it in silence to my own room, and there, opening it, I find — unseen by any other eyes but my own — a modest *pâté de foie gras*, of the kind I ate with the Princess Flirtia. I take out the *pâté*, replace the label, and have the hamper reconveyed to Charing Cross.

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE

BY A. CO—N D—LE

I found Hemlock Jones in the old Brook Street lodgings, musing before the fire. With the freedom of an old friend I at once threw myself in my usual familiar attitude at his feet, and gently caressed his boot. I was induced to do this for two reasons: one, that it enabled me to get a good look at his bent, concentrated face, and the other, that it seemed to indicate my reverence for his superhuman insight. So absorbed was he even then, in tracking some mysterious clue, that he did not seem to notice me. But therein I was wrong — as I always was in my attempt to understand that powerful intellect.

"It is raining," he said, without lifting his head.

"You have been out, then?" I said quickly.

"No. But I see that your umbrella is wet, and that your overcoat has drops of water on it."

I sat aghast at his penetration. After a pause he said carelessly, as if dismissing the subject: "Besides, I hear the rain on the window. Listen."

I listened. I could scarcely credit my ears, but there was the soft pattering of drops on the panes. It was evident there was no deceiving this man!

"Have you been busy lately?" I asked, changing the subject. "What new problem — given up by Scotland Yard as inscrutable — has occupied that gigantic intellect?"

He drew back his foot slightly, and seemed to hesitate ere he returned it to its original position. Then he

answered wearily: "Mere trifles—nothing to speak of. The Prince Kupoli has been here to get my advice regarding the disappearance of certain rubies from the Kremlin; the Rajah of Pootibad, after vainly beheading his entire bodyguard, has been obliged to seek my assistance to recover a jeweled sword. The Grand Duchess of Pretzel-Brauntswig is desirous of discovering where her husband was on the night of February 14; and last night"—he lowered his voice slightly—"a lodger in this very house, meeting me on the stairs, wanted to know why they did n't answer his bell."

I could not help smiling—until I saw a frown gathering on his inscrutable forehead.

"Pray remember," he said coldly, "that it was through such an apparently trivial question that I found out Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife, and What Happened to Jones!"

I became dumb at once. He paused for a moment, and then suddenly changing back to his usual pitiless, analytical style, he said: "When I say these are trifles, they are so in comparison to an affair that is now before me. A crime has been committed,—and, singularly enough, against myself. You start," he said. "You wonder who would have dared to attempt it. So did I; nevertheless, it has been done. *I* have been *robbed!*"

"*You* robbed! You, Hemlock Jones, the Terror of Peculators!" I gasped in amazement, arising and gripping the table as I faced him.

"Yes! Listen. I would confess it to no other. But *you* who have followed my career, who know my methods; you, for whom I have partly lifted the veil that conceals my plans from ordinary humanity,—you, who have for years rapturously accepted my confidences, passionately admired my inductions and inferences, placed yourself at my beck and call, become my slave, groveled at my feet, given up your practice except those few unremunerative and rap-

idly decreasing patients to whom, in moments of abstraction over *my* problems, you have administered strychnine for quinine and arsenic for Epsom salts; you, who have sacrificed anything and everybody to me, — *you* I make my confidant!"

I arose and embraced him warmly, yet he was already so engrossed in thought that at the same moment he mechanically placed his hand upon his watch chain as if to consult the time. "Sit down," he said. "Have a cigar?"

"I have given up cigar smoking," I said.

"Why?" he asked.

I hesitated, and perhaps colored. I had really given it up because, with my diminished practice, it was too expensive. I could afford only a pipe. "I prefer a pipe," I said laughingly. "But tell me of this robbery. What have you lost?"

He arose, and planting himself before the fire with his hands under his coat-tails, looked down upon me reflectively for a moment. "Do you remember the cigar case presented to me by the Turkish Ambassador for discovering the missing favorite of the Grand Vizier in the fifth chorus girl at the Hilarity Theatre? It was that one. I mean the cigar case. It was incrusted with diamonds."

"And the largest one had been supplanted by paste," I said.

"Ah," he said, with a reflective smile, "you know that?"

"You told me yourself. I remember considering it a proof of your extraordinary perception. But, by Jove, you don't mean to say you have lost it?"

He was silent for a moment. "No; it has been stolen, it is true, but I shall still find it. And by myself alone! In your profession, my dear fellow, when a member is seriously ill, he does not prescribe for himself, but calls in a brother doctor. Therein we differ. I shall take this matter in my own hands."

"And where could you find better?" I said enthusiastically. "I should say the cigar case is as good as recovered already."

"I shall remind you of that again," he said lightly. "And now, to show you my confidence in your judgment, in spite of my determination to pursue this alone, I am willing to listen to any suggestions from you."

He drew a memorandum book from his pocket and, with a grave smile, took up his pencil.

I could scarcely believe my senses. He, the great Hemlock Jones, accepting suggestions from a humble individual like myself! I kissed his hand reverently, and began in a joyous tone: —

"First, I should advertise, offering a reward; I should give the same intimation in hand-bills, distributed at the 'pubs' and the pastry-cooks'. I should next visit the different pawnbrokers; I should give notice at the police station. I should examine the servants. I should thoroughly search the house and my own pockets. I speak relatively," I added, with a laugh; "of course I mean *your* own."

He gravely made an entry of these details.

"Perhaps," I added, "you have already done this?"

"Perhaps," he returned enigmatically. "Now, my dear friend," he continued, putting the note-book in his pocket and rising, "would you excuse me for a few moments? Make yourself perfectly at home until I return; there may be some things," he added with a sweep of his hand toward his heterogeneously filled shelves, "that may interest you and while away the time. There are pipes and tobacco in that corner."

Then nodding to me with the same inscrutable face, he left the room. I was too well accustomed to his methods to think much of his unceremonious withdrawal, and made no doubt he was off to investigate some clue which had suddenly occurred to his active intelligence.

Left to myself, I cast a cursory glance over his shelves. There were a number of small glass jars containing earthy substances, labeled "Pavement and Road Sweepings," from the principal thoroughfares and suburbs of London, with the sub-directions "for identifying foot-tracks." There were several other jars, labeled "Fluff from Omnibus and Road Car Seats," "Cocoanut Fibre and Rope Strands from Mattings in Public Places," "Cigarette Stumps and Match Ends from Floor of Palace Theatre, Row A, 1 to 50." Everywhere were evidences of this wonderful man's system and perspicacity.

I was thus engaged when I heard the slight creaking of a door, and I looked up as a stranger entered. He was a rough-looking man, with a shabby overcoat and a still more disreputable muffler around his throat and the lower part of his face. Considerably annoyed at his intrusion, I turned upon him rather sharply, when, with a mumbled, growling apology for mistaking the room, he shuffled out again and closed the door. I followed him quickly to the landing and saw that he disappeared down the stairs. With my mind full of the robbery, the incident made a singular impression upon me. I knew my friend's habit of hasty absences from his room in his moments of deep inspiration; it was only too probable that, with his powerful intellect and magnificent perceptive genius concentrated on one subject, he should be careless of his own belongings, and no doubt even forget to take the ordinary precaution of locking up his drawers. I tried one or two and found that I was right, although for some reason I was unable to open one to its fullest extent. The handles were sticky, as if some one had opened them with dirty fingers. Knowing Hemlock's fastidious cleanliness, I resolved to inform him of this circumstance, but I forgot it, alas! until — but I am anticipating my story.

His absence was strangely prolonged. I at last seated

myself by the fire, and lulled by warmth and the patter of the rain on the window, I fell asleep. I may have dreamt, but during my sleep I had a vague semi-consciousness as of hands being softly pressed on my pockets — no doubt induced by the story of the robbery. When I came fully to my senses, I found Hemlock Jones sitting on the other side of the hearth, his deeply concentrated gaze fixed on the fire.

"I found you so comfortably asleep that I could not bear to awaken you," he said with a smile.

I rubbed my eyes. "And what news?" I asked. "How have you succeeded?"

"Better than I expected," he said, "and I think," he added, tapping his note-book, "I owe much to *you*."

Deeply gratified, I awaited more. But in vain. I ought to have remembered that in his moods Hemlock Jones was reticence itself. I told him simply of the strange intrusion, but he only laughed.

Later, when I arose to go, he looked at me playfully. "If you were a married man," he said, "I would advise you not to go home until you had brushed your sleeve. There are a few short brown sealskin hairs on the inner side of your forearm, just where they would have adhered if your arm had encircled a sealskin coat with some pressure!"

"For once you are at fault," I said triumphantly; "the hair is my own, as you will perceive; I have just had it cut at the hairdresser's, and no doubt this arm projected beyond the apron."

He frowned slightly, yet, nevertheless, on my turning to go he embraced me warmly — a rare exhibition in that man of ice. He even helped me on with my overcoat and pulled out and smoothed down the flaps of my pockets. He was particular, too, in fitting my arm in my overcoat sleeve, shaking the sleeve down from the armhole to the cuff with his deft fingers. "Come again soon!" he said, clapping me on the back.

"At any and all times," I said enthusiastically; "I only ask ten minutes twice a day to eat a crust at my office, and four hours' sleep at night, and the rest of my time is devoted to you always, as you know."

"It is indeed," he said, with his impenetrable smile.

Nevertheless, I did not find him at home when I next called. One afternoon, when nearing my own home, I met him in one of his favorite disguises, — a long blue swallow-tailed coat, striped cotton trousers, large turn-over collar, blacked face, and white hat, carrying a tambourine. Of course to others the disguise was perfect, although it was known to myself, and I passed him — according to an old understanding between us — without the slightest recognition, trusting to a later explanation. At another time, as I was making a professional visit to the wife of a publican at the East End, I saw him, in the disguise of a broken-down artisan, looking into the window of an adjacent pawnshop. I was delighted to see that he was evidently following my suggestions, and in my joy I ventured to tip him a wink; it was abstractedly returned.

Two days later I received a note appointing a meeting at his lodgings that night. That meeting, alas! was the one memorable occurrence of my life, and the last meeting I ever had with Hemlock Jones! I will try to set it down calmly, though my pulses still throb with the recollection of it.

I found him standing before the fire, with that look upon his face which I had seen only once or twice in our acquaintance, — a look which I may call an absolute concatenation of inductive and deductive ratiocination, — from which all that was human, tender, or sympathetic was absolutely discharged. He was simply an icy algebraic symbol! Indeed, his whole being was concentrated to that extent that his clothes fitted loosely, and his head was absolutely so much reduced in size by his mental compression

that his hat tipped back from his forehead and literally hung on his massive ears.

After I had entered he locked the doors, fastened the windows, and even placed a chair before the chimney. As I watched these significant precautions with absorbing interest, he suddenly drew a revolver and, presenting it to my temple, said in low, icy tones: —

"Hand over that cigar case!"

Even in my bewilderment my reply was truthful, spontaneous, and involuntary. "I have n't got it," I said.

He smiled bitterly, and threw down his revolver. "I expected that reply! Then let me now confront you with something more awful, more deadly, more relentless and convincing than that mere lethal weapon, — the damning inductive and deductive proofs of your guilt!" He drew from his pocket a roll of paper and a note-book.

"But surely," I gasped, "you are joking! You could not for a moment believe" —

"Silence! Sit down!" I obeyed.

"You have condemned yourself," he went on pitilessly. "Condemned yourself on my processes, processes familiar to you, applauded by you, accepted by you for years! We will go back to the time when you first saw the cigar case. Your expressions," he said in cold, deliberate tones, consulting his paper, "were, 'How beautiful! I wish it were mine.' This was your first step in crime — and my first indication. From 'I *wish* it were mine' to 'I *will* have it mine,' and the mere detail, '*How can* I make it mine?' the advance was obvious. Silence! But as in my methods it was necessary that there should be an overwhelming inducement to the crime, that unholy admiration of yours for the mere trinket itself was not enough. You are a smoker of cigars."

"But," I burst out passionately, "I told you I had given up smoking cigars."

"Fool!" he said coldly, "that is the *second* time you

have committed yourself. Of course you told me! What more natural than for you to blazon forth that prepared and unsolicited statement to *prevent* accusation. Yet, as I said before, even that wretched attempt to cover up your tracks was not enough. I still had to find that overwhelming, impelling motive necessary to affect a man like you. That motive I found in the strongest of all impulses — Love, I suppose you would call it," he added bitterly, "that night you called! You had brought the most conclusive proofs of it on your sleeve."

"But" — I almost screamed.

"Silence!" he thundered. "I know what you would say. You would say that even if you had embraced some Young Person in a sealskin coat, what had that to do with the robbery? Let me tell you, then, that that sealskin coat represented the quality and character of your fatal entanglement! You bartered your honor for it — that stolen cigar case was the purchaser of the sealskin coat!

"Silence! Having thoroughly established your motive, I now proceed to the commission of the crime itself. Ordinary people would have begun with that — with an attempt to discover the whereabouts of the missing object. These are not *my* methods."

So overpowering was his penetration that, although I knew myself innocent, I licked my lips with avidity to hear the further details of this lucid exposition of my crime.

"You committed that theft the night I showed you the cigar case, and after I had carelessly thrown it in that drawer. You were sitting in that chair, and I had arisen to take something from that shelf. In that instant you secured your booty without rising. Silence! Do you remember when I helped you on with your overcoat the other night? I was particular about fitting your arm in. While doing so I measured your arm with a spring tape measure, from the shoulder to the cuff. A later visit to your tailor

confirmed that measurement. It proved to be *the exact distance between your chair and that drawer!*"

I sat stunned.

"The rest are mere corroborative details! You were again tampering with the drawer when I discovered you doing so! Do not start! The stranger that blundered into the room with a muffler on — was myself! More, I had placed a little soap on the drawer handles when I purposely left you alone. The soap was on your hand when I shook it at parting. I softly felt your pockets, when you were asleep, for further developments. I embraced you when you left — that I might feel if you had the cigar case or any other articles hidden on your body. This confirmed me in the belief that you had already disposed of it in the manner and for the purpose I have shown you. As I still believed you capable of remorse and confession, I twice allowed you to see I was on your track: once in the garb of an itinerant negro minstrel, and the second time as a workman looking in the window of the pawnshop where you pledged your booty."

"But," I burst out, "if you had asked the pawnbroker, you would have seen how unjust" —

"Fool!" he hissed, "that was one of *your* suggestions — to search the pawnshops! Do you suppose I followed any of your suggestions, the suggestions of the thief? On the contrary, they told me what to avoid."

"And I suppose," I said bitterly, "you have not even searched your drawer?"

"No," he said calmly.

I was for the first time really vexed. I went to the nearest drawer and pulled it out sharply. It stuck as it had before, leaving a part of the drawer unopened. By working it, however, I discovered that it was impeded by some obstacle that had slipped to the upper part of the drawer, and held it firmly fast. Inserting my hand, I

pulled out the impeding object. It was the missing cigar case! I turned to him with a cry of joy.

But I was appalled at his expression. A look of contempt was now added to his acute, penetrating gaze. "I have been mistaken," he said slowly; "I had not allowed for your weakness and cowardice! I thought too highly of you even in your guilt! But I see now why you tampered with that drawer the other night. By some inexplicable means — possibly another theft — you took the cigar case out of pawn and, like a whipped hound, restored it to me in this feeble, clumsy fashion. You thought to deceive me, Hemlock Jones! More, you thought to destroy my infallibility. Go! I give you your liberty. I shall not summon the three policemen who wait in the adjoining room — but out of my sight forever!"

As I stood once more dazed and petrified, he took me firmly by the ear and led me into the hall, closing the door behind him. This reopened presently, wide enough to permit him to thrust out my hat, overcoat, umbrella, and overshoes, and then closed against me forever!

I never saw him again. I am bound to say, however, that thereafter my business increased, I recovered much of my old practice, and a few of my patients recovered also. I became rich. I had a brougham and a house in the West End. But I often wondered, pondering on that wonderful man's penetration and insight, if, in some lapse of consciousness, I had not really stolen his cigar case!

GOLLY AND THE CHRISTIAN; OR, THE MINX AND THE MANXMAN

BY H—LL C—NE

BOOK I

GOLLY COYLE was the only granddaughter of a vague and somewhat simple clergyman who existed, with an aunt, solely for Golly's epistolary purposes. There was, of course, intermediate ancestry, — notably a dead mother who was French, and therefore responsible for any later naughtiness in Golly, — but they have no purpose here. They lived in the Isle of Man. Golly knew a good deal of Man, for even at the age of twelve she was in love with John Gale — only son of Lord Gale, who was connected with the Tempests. Gales, however, were frequent and remarkable along the coast, so that it was not singular that one day she found John "coming on" on a headland where she was sitting. His dog had "pointed" .... "It 's exceedingly impolite to point to anything you want," said Golly. Touched by this, and overcome by a strange emotion, John Gale turned away and went to Canada. Slight as the incident was, it showed that inborn chivalry to women, that desire for the Perfect Life, that intense eagerness to incarnate Christianity in modern society, which afterward distinguished him. Golly loved him! For all that, she still remained a "tom-boy" as she was, — robbing orchards, mimicking tramps and policemen, buttering the stairs and the steps of houses, tying kettles to dogs' tails, and marching in a white jersey, with the curate's hat on, through the

streets of the village. "Gol dern my skin!" said the dear old clergyman, as he tried to emerge from a surplice which Golly had stitched together. "What spirits the child *do* have!" Yet everybody loved her! And when John Gale returned from Canada and looked into her big blue eyes one day at church, small wonder that he immediately went off again to Paris, and an extended Continental sojourn, with a serious leaning to theology! Golly bore his absence meekly but characteristically; got a boat, disported like a duck in the water, attempted to elope with a boy appropriately named Drake, but encountered a half gale at sea and a whole Gale in John on a yacht, who rescued them both. Convinced now that there was but one way to escape from his Fate — Golly! — John Gale took holy orders and at once started for London. As he stood on the deck of the steamer he heard an imbecile chuckle in his ear. It was the simple old clergyman: "You are going to London to join the Church, John; Golly is going there, too, as hospital nurse. There 's a pair of you! He! he! Look after her, John, and protect her Manx simplicity." Before John could recover himself, Golly was at his side executing the final steps of a "cellar-door flap jig" to the light-hearted refrain: —

"We are a simple family — we are — we are — we are!"

And even as her pure young voice arose above the screams of the departure whistle, she threw a double back-somersault on the quarter-deck, cleverly alighting on the spikes of the wheel before the delighted captain.

"Jingle my electric bells," he said, looking at the bright young thing, "but you 're a regular minx" —

"I beg your pardon," interrupted John Gale, with a quick flush.

"I mean a regular *Manx*," said the captain hurriedly.

A singular paleness crossed the deeply religious face of

John. As the vessel rose on the waves, he passed his hand hurriedly first across his brows and then over his high-buttoned clerical waistcoat, that visible sign of a devoted ascetic life! Then murmuring in his low, deep voice, "Brandy, steward," he disappeared below.

BOOK II

Glorious as were Golly's spirits, exquisitely simple her worldly ignorance, and irresistible her powers of mimicry, strangely enough they were considered out of place in St. Barabbas' Hospital. A light-hearted disposition to mistake a blister for a poultice; that rare Manx conscientiousness which made her give double doses to the patients as a compensation when she had omitted to give them a single one, and the faculty of bursting into song at the bedside of a dying patient, produced some liveliness not unmixed with perplexity among the hospital staff. It is true, however, that her performance of clog-dancing during the night-watches drew a larger and more persistent attendance of students and young surgeons than ever was seen before. Yet everybody loved her! Even her patients! "If it amooses you, miss, to make me tyke the pills wot 's meant for the lydy in the next ward, I ain't complyning," said an East End newsboy. "When ye tyke off the style of the doctor wot wisits me, miss, and imitates his wyes, Lawd! it does me as much good as his mixtures," said a consumptive charwoman. Even thus, old and young basked in the radiant youth of Golly. She found time to write to her family: —

Dear old Pals! I 'm here. J'y suis! bet your boots! While you 're wondering what has become of the Bright Young Thing, the B. Y. T. is lookin' out of the winder of St. Barabbas' Hospital — just taking in all of dear, roar-

ing, dirty London in one gulp! Such a place — Lordy! I 've been waiting three hours to see the crowd go by, and they have n't gone yet! Such crowds, such busses, — all green and blue, only a penny fare, and you can ride on top if you want to! Think of that, you dear old Manx people! But there — "the bell goes a-ringing for Sarah!" — they 're calling for Nurse! That 's the worst of this job: they 're always a-dyin' just as you 're getting interested in something else! Ta-ta!

GOLLY!

Then her dear old grandfather wrote: —

I 'm wondering where my diddleums, Golly, is! We all miss you so much, deary, though we don't miss so many little things as when you were here. My dear, conscientious, unselfish little girl! You don't say where John Gale is. Is he still protecting you — he-he! — you giddy, naughty thing! People wonder on the island why I let you go alone to London — they forget your dear mother was a Frenchwoman! If you see anything your dear old grandfather would like — send it on.

GRANFER.

Later, her aunt wrote: —

Have you seen the Queen yet, and does she wear her crown at breakfast? You might get over the area railing at Buckingham Palace — it would be nothing for a girl like you to do — and see if you can find out.

To these letters Golly answered, in her own light-hearted way: —

DEAR GRANKINS, — I have n't seen John much, but I think he 's like the Private Secretary at the play — he "don't

like London." Lordy! there — I 've let it out! I 've been to a theayter. Nurse Jinny Jones and me scrouged into the pit one night without paying, "pertendin'," as we were in uniform, we had come to take out a "Lydy" that had fainted. Such larks! and such a glorious theayter! I 'll tell you another time. Tell aunty the Queen 's always out when I call. But that 's nothing, everybody else is so affable and polite in London. Gentlemen — "real toffs," they call 'em — whom you don't know from Adam — think nothing of speaking to you in the street. Why, Nurse Jinny says — but there, another patient 's going off who by rights oughter have died only to-morrow. "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow," as that barn-stormer actor said. But they 're always calling for that giddy young thing, Your

GOLLY.

Meantime, John Gale, having abruptly left Golly at the door of St. Barabbas' Hospital, tactfully avoiding an unseemly altercation with the cab-driver regarding her exact fare, pursued his way thoughtfully to the residence of his uncle, the First Lord of the Admiralty. He found his Lordship in his bath-room. He was leaning over the bath-tub, which was half full of water, contemplating with some anxiety the model of a line-of-battle ship which was floating on it, bottom upward. "I don't think it can be quite right — do you?" he said, nervously grasping his nephew's hand as he pointed to the capsized vessel; "yet they always do it. Tell me!" he went on appealingly, "tell me, as a professing Christian and a Perfect Man — is it quite right?"

"I should think, sir," responded John Gale, with uncompromising truthfulness, "that the average vessel of commerce is not built in that way."

"Yet," said the First Lord of the Admiralty, with a

far-off look, "they all do it! And they don't steer! The larger they are and the more recent the model, the less they steer. Dear me — you ought to see 'em go round and round in that tub." Then, apparently recalling the probable purpose of John's visit, he led the way into his dressing-room. "So you are in London, dear boy. Is there any little thing you want? I have," he continued, absently fumbling in the drawers of his dressing-table, "a few curacies and a bishopric somewhere, but with these blessed models — I can't think where they are. Or what would you say to a nice chaplaincy in the navy, with a becoming uniform, on one of those thingummies?" He pointed to the bath-room. "Stay," he continued, as he passed his hand over his perplexed brows, "now I think of it — you 're quite unorthodox! Dear me! that would n't do. You see, Drake," — he paused, as John Gale started, — "I mean Sir Francis Drake, once suspended his chaplain for unorthodoxy, according to Froude's book. These admirals are dreadfully strict Churchmen. No matter! Come again some other time," he added, gently pushing his nephew downstairs and into the street, "and we 'll see about it."

With a sinking heart, John turned his steps toward Westminster. He would go and see Golly; perhaps he had not looked after her as he ought. Suddenly a remembered voice, in mimicking accents, fell upon his ear with the quotation, "Do you know?" Then, in a hansom passing swiftly by him, Golly, in hospital dress with flying ribbons, appeared, sitting between Lord Brownstone Ewer and Francis Horatio Nelson Drake, completely grown up. And from behind floated the inexpressibly sad refrain, "Hi tiddli hi!"

This is how it happened. One morning, Jinny Jones, another hospital nurse, had said to her, "Have you any objection, dear, to seeing a friend of another gent, a friend of mine?"

"None in the least, dear," said Golly. "I want to see

all that can be seen, and do all that can be done in London, and know the glory thereof. I only require that I shall be allowed to love John Gale whenever he permits it, which is n't often, and that I may be permitted to write simple letters to my doting relations at the rate of twelve pages a day, giving an account — *my own* account — of my doings. There! Go on now! Bring on your bears."

They had visited the chambers which Lord Brownstone and Drake occupied together, and in girlish innocence had put on the gentlemen's clothes and danced before them. Then they all went to the theatre, where Golly's delightful simplicity and childish ignorance of the world had charmed them. Everything to her was new, strange, and thrilling. She even leaned from the carriage windows to see the "wheels go round." She was surprised at the number of people in the theatre, and insisted on knowing if it was church, because they all sat there in their best clothes so quietly. She believed that the play was real, and frequently, from a stage box, interrupted the acting with explanations. She informed the heroine of the design of the villain waiting at the wings. And when the aged mother of the heroine was dying of starvation in a hovel, and she threw a bag of bonbons on the stage, with the vociferous declaration that "Lord Brownstone had just given them to her — but — Lordy! — *she* did n't want them," they were obliged to lead her away, closely followed by an usher and a policeman. "To think," she wrote to John Gale, "that the audience only laughed and shouted, and never offered to help! And yet look at the churches in London, where they dare to preach the gospel!"

Fired by this simple letter, and alarmed by Golly's simplicity, John Gale went to his clerical chief, Archdeacon Luxury, and demanded permission to preach next Sunday. "Certainly," said the Archdeacon; "you shall take my curate's place. I shall inform the congregation that you are

the son of Lord Gale. They are very particular Churchmen — all society people — and of course will be satisfied with the work of the Lord, especially," he added, with a polite smile, "when that work happens to be — the Lord Gale's son." Accordingly, the next Sunday, John Gale occupied the pulpit of St. Swithin. But an unexpected event happened. His pent-up eagerness to denounce the present methods of Christianity, his fullness of utterance, defeated his purpose. He was overcome with a kind of pulpit fright. His ideas of time and place fled him. After beginning, "Mr. Chairman, in rising to propose the toast of our worthy Archdeacon — Fellow Manxmen — the present moment — er — er — the proudest in my — er — life — Dearly beloved Golly — unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," he abruptly delivered the benediction and sat down. The incident, however, provoked little attention. The congregation, accustomed to sleep through the sermon, awoke at the usual time and went home. Only a single Scotchwoman said to him in passing: "Verra weel for a beginning, laddie. But give it hotter to 'em next time." Discomfited and bewildered, he communed with himself gloomily. "I can't marry Golly. I can't talk. I hate society. What 's to be done? I have it! I 'll go into a monastery."

He went into a monastery in Bishopsgate Street, reached by a threepenny 'bus. He gave out vaguely that he had got into "Something Good, in the City." Society was satisfied. Only Golly suspected the truth. She wrote to her grandfather: —

"I saw John Gale the other day with a crowd following him in the Strand. He had on only a kind of brown serge dressing-gown, tied around his waist by a rope, and a hood on his head. I think his poor 'toe-toes' were in sandals, and I dare say his legs were cold, poor dear. However, if he calls *that* protection of Golly — *I* don't! I might be run off at any moment — for all he 'd help. No matter!

If this Court understands herself, and she thinks she do, Golly can take care of herself — you bet."

Nevertheless, Golly lost her place at the hospital through her heroic defense of her friend Jinny Jones, who had been deceived by Lord Brownstone Ewer. "You would drive that poor girl into the street," she said furiously to the Chairman of the Board, throwing her cap and apron in their faces. "You 're a lot of rotten old hypocrites, and I 'm glad to get shut of you." Not content with that, she went to Drake and demanded that he should make his friend Lord Brownstone marry Jinny.

"Sorry — awfully sorry — my dear Golly, but he 's engaged to a rich American girl who is to pay his debts; but I 'll see that he does something handsome for Jinny. And *you*, my child, what are *you* going to do without a situation?" he added, with touching sympathy. "You see, I 've some vague idea of marrying you myself," he concluded meditatively.

"Thank you for nothing," interrupted Golly gayly, "but I can take care of myself and follow out my mission like John Gale."

"There 's a pair of you, certainly," said Drake, with a tinge of jealous bitterness.

"You bet it 's 'a pair' that will take your 'two knaves,' you and your Lord Brownstone," returned Golly, dropping a mock courtesy. "Ta-ta; I 'm going on the stage."

BOOK III

She went first into a tobacconist's — and sold cigarettes. Sometimes she suffered from actual want, and ate fried fish. "Do you know how nice fried fish tastes in London, — you on 'the Oilan'?" she wrote gayly. "I 'm getting on splendidly; so 's John Gale, I suppose, though he 's looking cadaverous from starving himself all round. Tell aunty

I have n't seen the Queen yet, though after all I really believe she has not seen me."

Then, after a severe struggle, she succeeded in getting on the stage as a song and dance girl. She sang melodiously and danced divinely, so remarkably that the ignorant public, knowing her to be a Manx girl, and vaguely associating her with the symbol of the Isle of Man, supposed she had three legs. She was the success of the season; her cup of ambition was filled. It was slightly embittered by the news that her friend Jinny Jones had killed herself in the church at the wedding of her recreant lover and the American heiress. But the affair was scarcely alluded to by the Society papers — who were naturally shocked at the bad taste of the deceased. And even Golly forgot it all — on the stage.

BOOK IV

Meanwhile John Gale, or Brother Boreas, as he was known in the monastery, was submitting — among other rigors — to an exceptionally severe winter in Bishopsgate Street, which seemed to have an Arctic climate of its own, — possibly induced by the "freezing-out" process of certain stock companies in its vicinity.

"You are miserable, and eager to get out in the wicked world again, my son," said the delightful old Superior, as he sat by the only fire, sipping a glass of mulled port, when John came in from shoveling snow outside. "I, therefore, merely to try you, shall make you gatekeeper. The keys of the monastery front door are under the door-mat in my cell, but I am a sound sleeper." He smiled seraphically, and winked casually as he sipped his port. "We will call it, if you please — a penance."

John threw himself in an agony of remorse and shame at the feet of the Superior. "It is n't of myself I 'm thinking," he confessed wildly, "but of that poor young man,

Brother Bones, in the next cell to mine. He is a living skeleton, has got only one lung and an atrophied brain. A night out might do him good."

The Father Superior frowned. "Do you know who he is?"

"No."

"His real name is Jones. Why do you start? You have heard it before?"

John had started, thinking of Jinny Jones, Golly's deserted and self-immolated friend.

"It is an uncommon name," he stammered — "for a monastery, I mean."

"He is or was an uncommon man!" said the Superior gravely. "But," he added resignedly, "we cannot pick and choose our company here. Most of us have done something and have our own reasons for this retreat. Brother Polygamus escaped here from the persecutions of his sixth wife. Even I," continued the Superior with a gentle smile, putting his feet comfortably on the mantelpiece, "have had my little fling, and the dear boys used to say — ahem! — but this is mere worldly vanity. You alone, my dear son," he went on with slight severity, "seem to be wanting in some criminality, or — shall I say? — some appropriate besetting sin to qualify you for this holy retreat. An absolutely gratuitous and blameless idiocy appears to be your only peculiarity, and for this you must do penance. From this day henceforth, I make you doorkeeper! Go on with your shoveling at present, and shut the door behind you; there 's a terrible draught in these corridors."

For three days John Gale underwent an agony of doubt and determination, and it still snowed in Bishopsgate Street.

On the fourth evening he went to Brother Bones.

"Would you like to have an evening out?"

"I would," said Brother Bones.

"What would you do?"

"I would go to see my remaining sister." His left eyelid trembled slowly in his cadaverous face.

"But if you should hear she was ruined like the other? What would you do?"

A shudder passed over the man. "I have not got my little knife," he said vacantly.

True, he had not! The Brotherhood had no pockets, — or rather only a corporate one, which belonged to the Superior. John Gale lifted his eyes in sublime exaltation. "You shall go out," he said with decision. "Muffle up until you are well out of Bishopsgate Street, where it still snows."

"But how did you get the keys?" said Brother Bones.

"From under the Father Superior's door-mat."

"But that was wrong, Brother."

"The mat bore the inscription, 'Salve,' which you know in Latin means 'Welcome,'" returned John Gale. "It was logically a permission."

The two men gazed at each other silently. A shudder passed over the two left eyelids of their wan spiritual faces.

"But I have no money," said Brother Bones.

"Nor have I. But here is a 'bus ticket and a free pass to the Gaiety. You will probably find Golly somewhere about. Tell her," he said in a hollow voice, "that I 'm getting on."

"I will," said Brother Bones, with a deep cough.

The gate opened and he disappeared in the falling snow. The bloodhound kept by the monastery — one of the real Bishopsgate breed — bayed twice, and licked its huge jaws in ghastly anticipation. "I wonder," said John Gale as he resumed his shoveling, "if I have done exactly right. Candor compels me to admit that it is an open question."

BOOK V

Early the next morning, Brother Bones was brought home by Policeman X, his hat crushed, his face haggard, his voice husky and unintelligible. He only said vaguely, "Washertime?"

"It is," said John Gale timidly, in explanation to Policeman X, "a case of spiritual exhaustion following a vigil."

"That war n't her name," said Policeman X sternly. "But don't let this 'ere 'appen again."

John Gale turned to Brother Bones. "Then you saw her — Golly?"

"No," said Brother Bones.

"Why? What on earth have you been doing?"

"Dunno! Found myself in stashun — zis morning! Thashall!"

Then John Gale sought the Superior in an agony of remorse, and confessed all. "I am unfit to remain doorkeeper. Remove me," he groaned bitterly.

The old man smiled gently. "On the contrary, I should have given you the keys myself. Hereafter you can keep them. The ways of our Brotherhood are mysterious, — indeed, you may think idiotic, — but we are not responsible for them. It 's all Brother Caine's doing — it 's 'All Caine!"

BOOK VI

Nevertheless, John Gale left the monastery. "The Bishopsgate Street winter does not suit me," he briefly explained to the Superior. "I must go south or southwest."

But he did neither. He saw Golly, who was living west. He upbraided her for going on the stage. She retorted: "Whose life is the more artificial, yours or mine? It is true that we are both imperfectly clothed," she added, glancing at a photograph of herself in a short skirt, "and

nŏt always in our right mind — but you 've caught nothing but a cold! Nevertheless, I love you and you love me."

Then he begged her to go with him to the South Seas and take the place of Father Damien among the colony of lepers. "It is a beautiful place, and inexpensive, for we shall live only a few weeks. What do you say, dearest? You know," he added, with a faint, sad smile, glancing at another photograph of her, — executing the high kick, — "you 're quite a leaper yourself."

But that night she received an offer of a new engagement. She wrote to John Gale: "The South Seas is rather an expensive trip to take simply to die. Could n't we do it as cheaply at home? Or could n't you prevail on your Father Superior to set up his monastery there? I 'm afraid I 'm not up to it. Why don't you try the old 'Oilan,' nearer home? There 's lots of measles and diphtheria about there lately."

When the heartbroken John Gale received this epistle, he also received a letter from his uncle, the First Lord of the Admiralty. "I don't fancy this Damien whim of yours. If you 're really in earnest about killing yourself, why not take a brief trial trip in one of our latest ironclads? It 's just as risky, although — as we are obliged to keep these things quiet in the Office — you will not of course get that publicity your noble soul craves."

Abandoned by all in his noble purposes, John Gale took the first steamer to the Isle of Man.

BOOK VII

But he did not remain there long. Once back in that epistolary island, he wrote interminable letters to Golly. When they began to bore each other, he returned to London and entered the Salvation Army. Crowds flocked to hear him preach. He inveighed against Society and Wick-

edness as represented in his mind by Golly and her friends, and praised a perfect Christianity represented by himself and *his* friends. A panic of the same remarkable character as the Bishopsgate Street winter took possession of London. Old Moore's, Zadkiel's, and Mother Shipton's prophecies were to be fulfilled at an early and fixed date, with no postponement on account of weather. Suddenly Society, John Drake, and Antichrist generally combined by ousting him from his church, and turning it into a music-hall for Golly! Then John Gale took his last and sublime resolve. His duty as a perfect Christian was to kill Golly! His logic was at once inscrutable, perfect, and — John Galish!

With this sublime and lofty purpose, he called upon Golly. The heroic girl saw his purpose in his eye — an eye at once black, murderous, and Christian-like. For an instant she thought it was better to succumb at once and thus end this remarkable attachment. Suddenly through this chaos of Spiritual, Religious, Ecstatic, Super-Egotistic whirl of confused thought, darted a gleam of Common, Ordinary Horse Sense! John Gale saw it illumine her blue eyes, and trembled. God in Mercy! If it came to *that!*

"Sit down, John," she said calmly. Then, in her sweet, clear voice, she said: "Did it ever occur to you, dearest, that a more ridiculous, unconvincing, purposeless, insane, God-forsaken idiot than you never existed? That you eclipse the wildest dreams of insanity? That you are a mental and moral 'What-is-it?'"

"It has occurred to me," he replied simply. "I began life with vast asinine possibilities which fall to the lot of few men; yet I cannot say that I have carried even *them* to a logical conclusion! But *you*, love! *you*, darling! conceived in extravagance, born to impossibility, a challenge to credulity, a problem to the intellect, a 'missing word' for all ages, — are you aware of any one as utterly unsympa-

thetic, unreal, and untrue to nature as you are, existing on the face of the earth, or in the waters under the earth?"

"You are right, dearest; there are none," she returned with the same calm, level voice. "It is true that I have at times tried to do something real and womanly, and not, you know, merely to complicate a — a" — her voice faltered — "theatrical situation — but I could n't! Something impelled me otherwise. Now you know why I became an actress! But even there I fail! *They* are allowed reasoning power off the stage — I have none at any time! I laugh in the wrong place — I do the unnecessary, extravagant thing. Endowed by some strange power with extraordinary attributes, I am supposed to make everybody love me, but I don't — I satisfy nobody; I convince none! I have no idea what will happen to me next. I am doomed to — I know not what."

"And I," he groaned bitterly, — "I, in some rare and lucid moments, have had a glimpse of this too. We are in the hands of some inscrutable but awful power. Tell me, Golly, tell me, darling, who is it?"

Again that gleam of Common or Ordinary Horse Sense came in her eye.

"I have found out who," she whispered. "I have found out who has created us, and made us as puppets in his hands."

"Is it the Almighty?" he asked.

"No; it is" — she said, with a burst of real laughter — "it is — the 'All Caine!"

"What! our countryman the Manxman? The only great Novelist? The beloved of Gladstone?" he gasped.

"Yes — and he intends to kill *you* — and we 're only to be married at your deathbed!"

John Gale arose with a look of stern determination. "I have suffered much and idiotically — but I draw a line at this. I shall kick!"

Golly clapped her hands joyfully. "We will!"

"And we 'll chuck him."

"We will."

They were choking with laughter.

"And go and get married in a natural, simple way like anybody else — and try — to do our duty — to God — to each other — and to our fellow-beings — and quit this — damned — nonsense — and in-fer-nal idiocy forever!"

"Amen!"

PUBLISHER'S NOTE. — "In that supreme work of my life, 'The Christian,'" said the gifted novelist to a reporter in speaking of his methods, "I had endowed the characters of Golly and John Gale with such superhuman vitality and absolute reality that — as is well known in the experience of great writers — they became thinking beings, and actually criticised my work, and even *interfered* and *rebelled* to the point of altering my climax and the end!" The present edition gives that ending, which of course is the only real one.

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN LONGBOWE, YEOMAN

BEING A MODERN-ANTIQUE REALISTIC ROMANCE

(COMPILED FROM SEVERAL EMINENT SOURCES.)

It seemeth but fair that I, John Longbowe, should set down this account of such hap and adventure as hath befallen me, without flourish, vaporing, or cozening of speech, but as becometh one who, not being a ready writer, goeth straight to the matter in hand in few words. So, though I offend some, I shall yet convince all, the which lieth closer to my purpose. Thus, it was in the year 1560, or 1650, or mayhap 1710 — for my memory is not what it hath been and I ever cared little for monkish calendars or such dry-as-dust matter, being active as becometh one who hath to make his way in the world — yet I wot well it was after the Great Plague, which I have great cause to remember, lying at my cozen's in Wardour Street, London, in that lamentable year, eating of gilly flowers, sulphur, hartes tongue and many stynking herbes; touching neither man nor mayd, save with a great tongs steept in pitch; wearing a fine maske of silk with a mouth piece of aromatic stuff — by reason of which acts of hardihood and courage I was miraculously preserved. This much I shall say as to the time of these happenings, and no more. I am a plain, blunt man — mayhap rude of speech should occasion warrant — so let them who require the exactness of a scrivener or a pedagogue go elsewhere for their entertainment and be hanged to them!

Howbeit, though no scholar, I am not one of those who

misuse the English speech, and, being foolishly led by the hasty custom of scriveners and printers to write the letters "T" and "H" joined together, which resembleth a "Y," do incontinently jump to the conclusion the THE is pronounced "Ye," — the like of which I never heard in all England. And though this be little toward those great enterprises and happenings I shall presently shew, I set it down for the behoof of such malapert wights as must needs gird at a man of spirit and action — and yet, in sooth, know not their own letters.

So to my tale. There was a great frost when my Lord bade me follow him to the water gate near our lodgings in the Strand. When we reached it we were amazed to see that the Thames was frozen over and many citizens disporting themselves on the ice — the like of which no man had seen before. There were fires built thereon, and many ships and barges were stuck hard and fast, and my Lord thought it vastly pretty that the people were walking under their bows and cabbin windows and climbing of their sides like mermen, but I, being a plain, blunt man, had no joy in such idlenesse, deeming it better that in these times of pith and enterprise they should be more seemly employed. My Lord, because of one or two misadventures by reason of the slipperiness of the ice, was fain to go by London Bridge, which we did; my Lord as suited his humor ruffling the staid citizens as he passed or peering under the hoods of their wives and daughters — as became a young gallant of the time. I, being a plain, blunt man, assisted in no such folly, but contented myself, when they complayned to me, with damning their souls for greasy interfering varlets. For I shall now make no scruple in declaring that my Lord was the most noble Earl of Southampton, being withheld from so saying before through very plainness and bluntness, desiring as a simple yeoman to make no boast of serving a man of so high quality.

We fared on over Bankside to the Globe playhouse, where my Lord bade me dismount and deliver a secret message to the chief player — which message was, "Had he diligently perused and examined that he wot of, and what said he thereof?" Which I did. Thereupon he that was called the chief player did incontinently proceed to load mine arms and wallet with many and divers rolls of manuscripts in my Lord's own hand, and bade me say unto him that there was a great frost over London, but that if he were to perform those plays and masques publickly, there would be a greater frost there — to wit, in the Globe playhouse. This I did deliver with the Manuscripts to my Lord, who changed countenance mightily at the sight of them, but could make nought of the message. At which the lad who held the horses before the playhouse — one Will Shakespeare — split with laughter. Whereat my Lord cursed him for a deer-stealing, coney-catching Warwickshire lout, and cuffed him soundly. I wot there will be those who remember that this Will Shakespeare afterwards became a player and did write plays — which were acceptable even to the Queen's Majesty's self — and I set this down not from vanity to shew I have held converse with such, nor to give a seemingness and colour to my story, but to shew what ill-judged, misinformed knaves were they who did afterwards attribute friendship between my Lord and this Will Shakespeare, even to the saying that he made sonnets to my Lord. Howbeit, my Lord was exceeding wroth, and I, to beguile him, did propose that we should leave our horses and cargoes of manuscript behind and cross on the ice afoot, which conceit pleased him mightily. In sooth it chanced well with what followed, for hardly were we on the river when we saw a great crowd coming from Westminster, before a caravan of strange animals and savages in masks, capering and capricolling, dragging after them divers sledges quaintly fashioned like swannes, in which were ladies attired as fairies and

goddesses and such like heathen and wanton trumpery, which I, as a plain, blunt man, would have fallen to cursing, had not my Lord himself damned me under his breath to hold my peace, for that he had recognized my Lord of Leicester's colours and that he made no doubt they were of the Court. As forsooth this did presently appear; also that one of the ladies was her Gracious Majesty's self — masked to the general eye, the better to enjoy these miscalled festivities. I say miscalled, for, though a loyal subject of her Majesty, and one who hath borne arms at Tilbury Fort in defence of her Majesty, it inflamed my choler, as a plain and blunt man, that her Mightiness should so degrade her dignity. Howbeit, as a man who hath his way to make in the world, I kept mine eyes well upon the anticks of the Great, while my Lord joined the group of maskers and their follies. I recognized her Majesty's presence by her discourse in three languages to as many Ambassadors that were present — though I marked well that she had not forgotten her own tongue, calling one of her ladies "a sluttish wench," nor her English spirit in cuffing my Lord of Essex's ears for some indecorum — which, as a plain man myself, curt in speech and action, did rejoice me greatly. But I must relate one feat, the like of which I never saw in England before or since. There was a dance of the maskers, and in the midst of it her Majesty asked the Ambassador from Spayne if he had seen the latest French dance. He replied that he had not. Whereupon Her Most Excellent Majesty skipt back a pace and forward a pace, and lifting her hoop, delivered a kick at his Excellency's hat which sent it flying the space of a good English ell above his head! Howbeit so great was the acclamation that her Majesty was graciously moved to repeat it to my Lord of Leicester, but, tripping back, her high heels caught in her farthingale, and she would have fallen on the ice, but for that my Lord, with exceeding swiftness and dexterity, whisked his cloak

from his shoulder, spreading it under her, and so received her body in its folds on the ice, without himself touching her Majesty's person. Her Majesty was greatly pleased at this and bade my Lord buy another cloak at her cost, though it swallowed an estate; but my Lord replyed, after the lying fashion of the time, that it was honour enough for him to be permitted to keep it after "it had received her Royal person." I know that this hap hath been partly related of another person — the shipman Raleigh — but I tell such as deny me that they lie in their teeth, for, I John Longbowe, have cause — miserable cause enough, I warrant — to remember it, and my Lord can bear me out! For, spite of his fair speeches, when he was quit of the Royal presence, he threw me his wet and bedraggled cloak and bade me change it with him for mine own, which was dry and warm. And it was this simple act which wrought the lamentable and cruel deed of which I was the victim, for, as I followed my Lord, thus apparelled, across the ice, I was suddenly set upon and seized, a choke-pear clapt into my mouth so that I could not cry aloud, mine eyes bandaged, mine elbows pinioned at my side in that fatall cloak like to a trussed fowl, and so I was carried to where the ice was broken, and thrust into a boat. Thence I was conveyed in the same rude sort to a ship, dragged up her smooth, wet side, and clapt under hatches. Here I lay helpless as in a swoon. When I came to, it was with a great trampling on the decks above and the washing of waves below, and I made that the ship was moving — but where I knew not. After a little space the hatch was lifted from where I lay, the choke-pear taken from my mouth; but not the bandage from mine eyes, so I could see nought around me. But I heard a strange voice say: "What coil is this? This is my Lord's cloak in sooth, but not my Lord that lieth in it! Who is this fellow?" At which I did naturally discover the great misprise of those varlets who had taken me for my

dear Lord, whom I now damned in my heart for changing of the cloaks! Howbeit, when I had fetched my breath with difficulty, being well nigh spent by reason of the gag, I replyed that I was John Longbowe, my Lord's true yeoman, as good a man as any, as they should presently discover when they set me ashore. That I knew — "Softly, friend," said the Voice, "thou knowest too much for the good of England and too little for thine own needs. Thou shalt be sent where thou mayest forget the one and improve thy knowledge of the other." Then as if turning to those about him, for I could not see by reason of the blindfold, he next said: "Take him on your voyage, and see that he escape not till ye are quit of England." And with that they clapt to the hatch again, and I heard him cast off from the ship's side. There was I, John Longbowe, an English yeoman, — I, who but that day had held converse with Will Shakespeare and been cognizant of the revels of Her Most Christian Majesty even to the spying of her garter! — I was kidnapped at the age of forty-five or thereabout — for I will not be certain of the year — and forced to sea, for that my Lord of Southampton had provoked the jealousie and envy of divers other great nobles.

CHAPTERS I TO XX

I AM FORCED TO SEA AND TO BECOME A PIRATE! I SUFFER LAMENTABLY FROM SICKNESS BY REASON OF THE BIGNESSE OF THE WAVES. I COMMIT MANY CRUELTIES AND BLOODSHED. BUT BY THE DIVINE INTERCESSION I EVENTUALLY THROW THE WICKED CAPTAIN OVERBOARD AND AM ELECTED IN HIS STEAD. I DISCOVER AN ISLAND OF TREASURE, OBTAIN POSSESSION THEREOF BY A TRICKE, AND PUT THE NATIVES TO THE SWORD

I marvel much at those who deem it necessary in the setting down of their adventures to gloze over the whiles

between with much matter of the country, the peoples, and even their own foolish reflections thereon, hoping in this way to cozen the reader with a belief in their own truthfulness, and encrease the extravagance of their deeds. I, being a plain, blunt man, shall simply say for myself that for many days after being taken from the bilboes and made free of the deck, I was grievously distempered by reason of the waves, and so collapsed in the bowels that I could neither eat, stand, nor lie. Being thus in great fear of death, from which I was miraculously preserved, I, out of sheer gratitude to my Maker, did incontinently make oath and sign articles to be one of the crew — which were buccaneers. I did this the more readily as we were to attack the ships of Spayne only, and through there being no state of Warre at that time between England and that country, it was wisely conceived that this conduct would provoke it, and we should thus be forearmed, as became a juste man in his quarrel. For this we had the precious example of many great Captains. We did therefore heave to and burn many ships — the quality of those engagements I do not set forth, not having a seaman's use of ship speech, and despising, as a plain, blunt man, those who misuse it, having it not.

But this I do know, that, having some conceit of a shipman's ways and of pirates, I did conceive at this time a pretty song for my comradoes, whereof the words ran thus: —

Yo ho ! when the Dog Watch bayeth loud
In the light of a mid-sea moon !
And the Dead Eyes glare in the stiffening Shroud,
For that is the Pirate's noon !
When the Night Mayres sit on the Dead Man's Chest
Where no manne's breath may come —
Then hey for a bottle of Rum ! Rum ! Rum !
And a passage to Kingdom come !

I take no credit to myself for the same, except so far as it may shew a touch of my Lord of Southampton's manner — we being intimate — but this I know, that it was much

acclaimed by the crew. Indeed they, observing that the Captain was of a cruel nature, would fain kill him and put me in his stead, but I, objecting to the shedding of precious blood in such behoof, did prevent such a lamentable and inhuman action by stealthily throwing him by night from his cabbin window into the sea — where, owing to the inconceivable distance of the ship from shore, he was presently drowned. Which untoward fate had a great effect upon my fortunes, since, burthening myself with his goods and effects, I found in his chest a printed proclamation from an aged and infirm clergyman in the West of England covenanting that, for the sum of two crowns, he would send to whoso offered, the chart of an island of great treasure in the Spanish Main, whereof he had had confession from the lips of a dying parishioner, and the amount gained thereby he would use for the restoration of his parish church. Now I, reading this, was struck by a great remorse and admiration for our late Captain, for that it would seem that he was, like myself, a staunch upholder of the Protestant Faith and the Church thereof, as did appear by his possession of the chart, for which he had no doubt paid the two good crowns. As an act of penance I resolved upon finding the same island by the aid of the chart, and to that purpose sailed East many days, and South, and North, and West as many other days — the manner whereof and the latitude and longitude of which I shall not burden the reader with, holding it, as a plain, blunt man, mere padding and impertinence to fill out my narrative, which helpeth not the general reader. So, I say, when we sighted the Island, which seemed to be swarming with savages, I ordered the masts to be stripped, save but for a single sail which hung sadly and distractedly, and otherwise put the ship into the likeness of a forlorn wreck, clapping the men, save one or two, under hatches. This I did to prevent the shedding of precious blood, knowing full well that the ignorant savages, believing the ship in

sore distress, would swim off to her with provisions and fruit, bearing no arms. Which they did, while we, as fast as they clomb the sides, despatched them at leisure, without unseemly outcry or alarms. Having thus disposed of the most adventurous, we landed and took possession of the island, finding thereon many kegs of carbuncles and rubies and pieces of eight — the treasure store of those lawless pirates who infest the seas, having no colour of war or teaching of civilisation to atone for their horrid deeds.

I discovered also, by an omission in the chart, that this was not the Island wot of by the good and aged Devonshire divine — and so we eased our consciences of accounting for the treasure to him. We then sailed away, arriving after many years' absence at the Port of Bristol in Merrie England, where I took leave of the Jolly Roger, that being the name of my ship; it was a strange conceit of seamen in after years ever to call the device of my *flag* — to wit, a skull and bones made in the sign of a Cross — by the *name* my ship bore, and if I have only corrected the misuse of history by lying knaves, I shall be content with this writing. But alas! such are the uncertainties of time; I found my good Lord of Southampton dead and most of his friends beheaded, and the blessed King James of Scotland — if I mistake not, for these also be the uncertainties of time — on the throne. In due time I married Mistress Marian Straitways. I might have told more of trifling, and how she fared, poor wench! in mine absence, even to the following of me in another ship, in a shipboy's disguise, and how I rescued her from a scheming Pagan villain; but, as a plain, blunt man, I am no hand at the weaving of puling love tales and such trifling diversions for lovesick mayds and their puny gallants — having only consideration for men and their deeds, which I have here set down bluntly and even at mine advanced years am ready to maintain with the hand that set it down.

DAN'L BOREM

BY E. N—S W—T—T

I

DAN'L BOREM poured half of his second cup of tea abstractedly into his lap.

"Guess you 've got suthin' on yer mind, Dan'l," said his sister.

"More 'n likely I 've got suthin' on my pants," returned Dan'l with that exquisitely dry, though somewhat protracted humor which at once thrilled and bored his acquaintances. "But — speakin' o' that hoss trade" —

"For goodness' sake, don't!" interrupted his sister wearily; "yer allus doin' it. Jest tell me about that young man — the new clerk ye think o' gettin'."

"Well, I telegraphed him to come over, arter I got this letter from him," he returned, handing her a letter. "Read it out loud."

But his sister, having an experienced horror of prolixity, glanced over it. "Far as I kin see he takes more 'n two hundred words to say you 've got to take him on trust, and sez it suthin' in a style betwixt a business circular and them Polite Letter Writers. I thought you allowed he was a tony feller."

"Ef he does not brag much, ye see, I kin offer him small wages," said Dan'l, with a wink. "It 's kinder takin' him at his own figger."

"And *that* might n't pay! But ye don't think o' bringin' him *here* — in this house? 'Cept you 're thinkin' o' tellin' him that yarn o' yours about the hoss trade to be-

guile the winter evenings. I told ye ye 'd hev to pay yet to get folks to listen to it."

"Wrong agin — ez you 'll see! Wot ef I get a hundred thousand folks to pay me for tellin' it? But, speakin' o' this young feller, I calkilated to send him to the Turkey Buzzard Hotel;" and he looked at his sister with a shrewd yet humorous smile.

"What!" said his sister in alarm. "The Turkey Buzzard! Why, he 'll be starved or pizoned! He won't stay there a week."

"Ef he 's pizoned to death he won't be able to demand any wages; ef he leaves because he can't stand it — it 's proof positive he could n't stand me. Ef he 's only starved and made weak and miserable he 'll be easy to make terms with. It may seem hard what I 'm sayin', but what seems hard on the other feller always comes mighty easy to you. The thing is *not* to be the 'other feller.' Ye ain't listenin'. Yet these remarks is shrewd and humorous, and hez been thought so by literary fellers."

"H'm!" said his sister. "What 's that ye was jest sayin' about folks bein' willin' to pay ye for tellin' that hoss-trade yarn o' yours?"

"Thet 's only what one o' them smart New York publishers allowed it was worth arter hearin' me tell it," said Dan'l dryly.

"Go way! You or him must be crazy. Why, it ain't ez good as that story 'bout a man who had a balky hoss that could be made to go only by buildin' a fire under him, and arter the man sells that hoss and the secret, and the man wot bought him tries it on, the blamed hoss lies down over the fire, and puts it out."

"I 've allus allowed that the story ye hev to tell yourself is a blamed sight funnier than the one ye 're listenin' to," said Dan'l. "Put that down among my sayin's, will ye?"

"But your story was never anythin' more than one o' them snippy things ye see in the papers, drored out to no end by you. It 's only one o' them funny paragraphs ye kin read in a minit in the papers that takes *you* an hour to tell."

To her surprise Dan'l only looked at his sister with complacency.

"That," he said, "is jest what the New York publisher sez. 'The 'Merrikan people,' sez he, 'is ashamed o' bein' short and peart and funny; it lacks dignity,' sez he; 'it looks funny,' sez he, 'but it ain't deep-seated nash'nul literature,' sez he. 'Them snips o' funny stories and short dialogues in the comic papers — they make ye laff,' sez he, 'but laffin' is n't no sign o' deep morril purpose,' sez he, 'and it ain't genteel and refined. Abraham Linkin with his pat anecdotes ruined our standin' with dignified nashuns,' sez he. 'We cultivated publishers is sick o' hearin' furrin nashuns roarin' over funny 'Merrikan stories; we 're goin' to show 'em that, even ef we have n't classes and titles and sich, we kin be dull. We 're workin' the historical racket for all that it 's worth, — ef we can't go back more 'n a hundred years or so, we kin rake in a Lord and a Lady when we do, and we 're gettin' in some ole-fashioned spellin' and "methinkses" and "peradventures." We 're doin' the religious bizness ez slick ez Robert Elsmere, and we find lots o' soul in folks — and heaps o' quaint morril characters,' sez he."

"Sakes alive, Dan'l!" broke in his sister; "what 's all that got to do with your yarn 'bout the hoss trade?"

"Everythin'," returned Dan'l. "'For,' sez he, 'Mr. Borem,' sez he, 'you 're a quaint morril character. You 've got protracted humor,' sez he. 'You 've been an hour tellin' that yarn o' yours! Ef ye could spin it out to fill two chapters of a book — yer fortune 's made! For you 'll show that a successful hoss trade involves the highest nash'nul

characteristics. That what common folk calls "selfishness," "revenge," "mean lyin'," and "low-down money-grubbin' ambishun," is really "quaintness," and will go in double harness with the bizness of a Christian banker,' sez he."

"Created goodness, Dan'l! You 're designin' ter" —

Dan'l Borem rose, coughed, expectorated carefully at the usual spot in the fender, his general custom of indicating the conclusion of a subject or an interview, and said dryly: "I 'm thar!"

II

To return to the writer of the letter, whose career was momentarily cut off by the episode of the horse trade (who, if he had previously received a letter written by somebody else would have been an entirely different person and not in this novel at all): John Lummox — known to his family as "the perfect Lummox" — had been two years in college, but thought it rather fine of himself — a habit of thought in which he frequently indulged — to become a clerk, but finally got tired of it, and to his father's relief went to Europe for a couple of years, returning with some knowledge of French and German, and the cutting end of a German student's blunted dueling-sword. Having, as he felt, thus equipped himself for the hero of an American "good society" novel, he went on board a "liner," where there would naturally be susceptible young ladies. One he thought he recognized as a girl with whom he used to play "forfeits" in the vulgar past of his boyhood. She sat at his table, accompanied by another lady whose husband seemed to be a confirmed dyspeptic. His remarks struck Lummox as peculiar.

"Shall I begin dinner with pudding and cheese or take the ordinary soup first? I quite forget which I did last night," he said anxiously to his wife.

But Mrs. Starling hesitated.

"Tell me, Mary," he said, appealing to Miss Bike, the young lady.

"I should begin with the pudding," said Miss Bike decisively, "and between that and the arrival of the cheese you can make up your mind, and then, if you think better, go back to the soup."

"Thank you so much. Now, as to drink? Shall I take the Friedrichshalle first or the Bénédictine? You know the doctor insists upon the Friedrichshalle, but I don't think I did well to mix them as I did yesterday. Or shall I take simply milk and beer?"

"I should say simplicity was best. Besides, you can always fill up with champagne later."

How splendidly this clear-headed, clear-eyed girl dominated the man! Lummox felt that *really* he might renew her acquaintance! He did so.

"I remembered you," she said. "You 've not changed a bit since you were eight years old."

John, wishing to change the subject, said that he thought Mr. Starling seemed an uncertain man.

"Very! He 's even now in his stateroom sitting in his pyjamas with a rubber shoe on one foot and a pump on the other, wondering whether he ought to put on golf knickerbockers with a dressing-gown and straw hat before he comes on deck. He has already put on and taken off about twenty suits."

"He certainly is very trying," returned Lummox. He paused and colored deeply. "I beg," he stammered, "I hope — you don't think me guilty of a pun! When I said 'trying' I referred entirely to the effect on your sensitiveness of these tentative attempts toward clothing himself."

"I should never accuse *you* of levity, Mr. Lummox," said the young lady, gazing thoughtfully upon his calm but somewhat heavy features, — "never."

Yet he would have liked to reclaim himself by a show of lightness. He was leaning on the rail, looking at the sea. The scene was beautiful.

"I suppose," he said, rolling with the sea and his early studies of Doctor Johnson, "that one would in the more superior manner show his appreciation of all this by refraining from the obvious comment which must needs be recognized as comparatively commonplace and vulgar; but really this is so superb that I must express some of my emotion, even at the risk of lowering your opinion of my good taste, provided, of course, that you have any opinion on the one hand or any good taste on the other."

"Without that undue depreciation of one's self which must ever be a sign of self-conscious demerit," said the young girl lightly, "I may say that I am not generally good at Johnsonese; but it may relieve your mind to know that had you kept silence one instant longer, I should have taken the risk of lowering your opinion of my taste, provided, of course, that you have one to lower and are capable of that exertion, — if such indeed it may be termed, — by remarking that this is perfectly magnificent."

"Do you think," he said gloomily, still leaning on the rail, "that we can keep this kind of thing up — perhaps I should say down — much longer? For myself, I am feeling far from well; it may have been the lobster — or that last sentence — but" —

They were both silent. "Yet," she said, after a pause, "you can at least take Mr. Starling and his dyspepsia off my hands. You might be equal to that exertion."

"I suppose that by this time I ought to be doing something for somebody," he said thoughtfully. "Yes, I will."

That evening after dinner he took Mr. Starling into the smoking-room and card-room. They had something hot. At 4 A. M., with the assistance of the steward, he projected

Mr. Starling into Mrs. Starling's stateroom, delicately withdrawing to evade the lady's thanks.

At breakfast he saw Miss Bike. "Thank you so much," she said; "Mrs. Starling found Starling greatly improved. He himself admitted he was 'never berrer,' and, far from worrying about what night-clothes he should wear, went to bed *as he was* — even to his hat. Mrs. Starling calls you 'her preserver,' and Mr. Starling distinctly stated that you were a 'jolly-good-fler.'"

"And you?" asked John Lummox.

"In your present condition of abnormal self-consciousness and apperceptive egotism, I really should n't like to say."

When the voyage was ended Mr. Lummox went to see Mary Bike at her house, and his father — whom he had not seen for ten years — at *his* house. With a refined absence of natural affection he contented himself with inquiring of the servants as to his father's habits, and if he still wore dress-clothes at dinner. The information thus elicited forced him to the conclusion that the old gentleman's circumstances were reduced, and that it was possible that he, John Lummox, might be actually compelled to earn his own living. He communicated that suspicion to his father at dinner, and over the last bottle of "Mouton," a circumstance which also had determined him in his resolution.

"You might," said his father thoughtfully, "offer yourself to some rising American novelist as a study for the new hero, — one absolutely without ambition, capacity, or energy; willing, however, to be whatever the novelist chooses to make him, so long as he has n't to choose for himself. If your inordinate self-consciousness is still in your way, I could give him a few points about you, myself."

"I had thought," said John, hesitatingly, "of going into your office and becoming your partner in the business. You could always look after me, you know."

A shudder passed over the old man. Then he tremblingly muttered to himself: —

"Thank heaven! There is one way it may still be averted!"

Retiring to his room he calmly committed suicide, thoughtfully leaving the empty poison-bottle in the fender.

And this is how John Lummox came to offer himself as a clerk to Dan'l Borem. The ways of Providence are indeed strange, yet those of the novelist are only occasionally novel.

III

John K. Lummox lived for a week at the Turkey Buzzard Hotel exclusively on doughnuts and innuendoes. He was informed by Mr. Borem's clerk — whose place he was to fill — that he would n't be able to stand it, and thus received the character of his employer from his last employee.

"I suppose," said Dan'l Borem, chuckling, "that he said I was a old skinflint, good only at a hoss trade, uneddicated, ignorant, and unable to keep accounts, and an oppressor o' the widder and orphan. Allowed that my cute sayin's was a kind o' ten-cent parody o' them proverbs in Poor Richard's Almanack!"

"Omitting a few expletives, he certainly did," returned Lummox with great delicacy.

"He allowed to me," said Dan'l thoughtfully, "that *you* was a poor critter that had n't a single reason to show for livin'; that the fool-killer had been shadderin' you from your birth, and that you had n't paid a cent profit on your father's original investment in ye, nor on the assessments he 'd paid on ye ever since. He seems to be a cute feller arter all, and I 'm rather sorry he 's leavin'."

"I am quite willing to abandon my position in his favor, now," said Lummox with alacrity.

"No," said Dan'l, rubbing his chin argumentatively; "the only way for us to do is to circumvent him like in a hoss trade — with suthin' unexpected. When he thinks you 're goin' to sleep in the shafts you 'll run away; and when he thinks I 'm vicious I 'll let a woman or a child drive me."

IV

"Well, Dan'l, how 's that new clerk o' yours gettin' on?" said Mrs. Bigby a week later.

"Purty fine! He 's good at accounts and hez got to know the bank's customers by this time. But I allus reckoned he 'd get stuck with some o' them counterfeit notes — and he hez! Ye see he ain't accustomed to look at a five or a ten dollar note as sharp as some men, and he 's already taken in two tens and a five, counterfeits."

"Gracious!" said Mrs. Bigsby. "What did the poor feller do?"

"Oh, he ups and tells me, all right, after he discovered it. And sez he: 'I 've charged my account with 'em,' sez he, 'so the bank won't lose it.'"

"Why, Dan'l," said Mrs. Bigsby, "ye didn't let that poor feller" —

"You hol' on!" said her brother; "business is business; but I sez to him: 'Ye oughter put it down to Profit and Loss account. Or perhaps we 'll have a chance o' gettin' rid o' them, — not in Noo York, where folks is sharp, but here in the country, and then ye kin credit yourself with the amount arter you 've got rid o' them.'"

"Laws! I 'm sorry ye did that, Dan'l," said Mrs. Bigsby.

"With that he riz up," continued Dan'l, ignoring his sister, "and, takin' them counterfeit notes from my hand, sez he: 'Them notes belong to *me* now,' sez he, 'and I 'm goin' to destroy 'em.' And with that he walks over to the

fire as stiff as a poker, and held them notes in it until they were burnt clean up."

"Well, but that was honest and straightforward in him!" said Mrs. Bigsby.

"Um! but it was n't business — and ye see" — Dan'l paused and rubbed his chin.

"Well, go on!" said Mrs. Bigsby impatiently.

"Well, ye see, neither him nor me was very smart in detectin' counterfeits, or even knowin' 'em, and" —

"Well! For goodness' sake, Dan'l, speak out!"

"Well — *the dum fool burnt up three good bills*, and we neither of us knew it!"

V

The "unexpected" which Dan'l Borem had hinted might characterize his future conduct was first intimated by his treatment of the "Widow Cully," an aged and impoverished woman whose property was heavily mortgaged to him. He had curtly summoned her to come to his office on Christmas Day and settle up. Frightened, hopeless, and in the face of a snowstorm, the old woman attended, but was surprised by receiving a "satisfaction piece" in full from the banker, and a gorgeous Christmas dinner.

"All the same," said Mrs. Bigsby to Lummox, "Dan'l might hev done all this without frightenin' the poor old critter into a nervous fever, chillin' her through by makin' her walk two miles through the snow, and keepin' her on the ragged edge o' despair for two mortal hours! But it 's his humorous way."

"Did he give any reason for being so lenient to the widow?" asked Lummox.

"He said that her son had given him a core of his apple when they were boys together. Dan'l is mighty thoughtful o' folks that was kind to him in them days."

"Is that all?" said Lummox, astonished.

"Well — I 've kinder thought suthin' else," said Mrs. Bigsby hesitatingly.

"What?"

"That it 's bein' Christmas Day — and as I 've heard tell that 's *no day in law*, but just like Sunday — Dan'l mebbe thought he might crawl outer that satisfaction piece, ef he ever wanted ter! Dan'l is mighty cute."

VI

Mr. John Lummox was not behind his employer in developing unexpected traits of character. Hitherto holding aloof from his neighbors in Old Folksville, he suddenly went to a social gathering, and distinguished himself as the principal and popular guest of the evening. As Dan'l Borem afterward told his sister: "He was one o' them combination minstrels and variety shows in one. He sang through a whole opery, made the pianner jest howl, gave some recitations, Casabianker and Betsy and I are Out; imitated all them tragedians; did tricks with cards and fetched rabbits outer hats, besides liftin' the pianner with two men sittin' on it, jest by his teeth. Created snakes!" said Borem, concluding his account, which here is necessarily abbreviated, "ef he learnt all that in his two years in Europe I ain't sayin' anythin' more agin eddication and furrin' travel after this! Why, the next day there was quite a run on the bank jest to see *him*. He is makin' the bizness pop'lar."

"Then ye think ye 'll get along together?"

"I reckon we 'll hitch hosses," said Dan'l, with a smile.

A few weeks later, one evening, Dan'l Borem sat with his sister alone. John Lummox, who was now residing with them, was attending a social engagement. Mrs. Bigsby knew that Dan'l had something to communicate, but knew that he would do so in his own way.

"Speakin' o' hoss trades," he began.

"We *was n't* and we ain't goin' to," said Mrs. Bigsby with great promptness. "I 've heard enough of 'em."

"But this here one hez suthin' to do with your fr'en', John Lummox," said Dan'l, with a chuckle.

Mrs. Bigsby stared. "Go on, then," she said, "but, for goodness' sake, cut it short."

Dan'l threw away his quid and replenished it from his silver tobacco box. Mrs. Bigsby shuddered slightly as she recognized the usual preliminary to prolixity, but determined, as far as possible, to make her brother brief.

"It mout be two weeks ago," began Dan'l, "that I see John Lummox over at Palmyra, where he 'd been visitin'. He was drivin' a hoss, the beautifulest critter — for color — I ever saw. It was yaller, with mane and tail a kinder golden, like the hair o' them British blondes that was here in the variety show."

"Dan'l!" exclaimed Mrs. Bigsby, horrified. "And you allowed you never went thar!"

"Saw 'em on the posters — and mebbe the color was a little brighter thar," said Dan'l carelessly — "but who 's interruptin' now?"

"Go on," said Mrs. Bigsby.

"'Got a fine hoss thar,' sez I; 'reckon I never see such a purty color,' sez I. 'He is purty,' sez he; 'per'aps too purty for *me* to be a-drivin', but he is n't fast.' 'I ain't speakin' o' that,' sez I; 'it 's his looks that I 'm talkin' of; whar might ye hev got him?' 'He was offered to me by a fr'en' o' me boyhood,' sez he; 'he 's a *pinto* mustang,' sez he, 'from Californy, whar they breed 'em.' 'What 's a *pinto* hoss?' sez I. 'The same ez a calico hoss,' sez he; 'what they have in cirkises, but ye never see 'em that color.' An' he was right, for when I looked him over I never *did* see such a soft and silky coat, and his mane and tail jest glistened. 'It *is* a little too showy for ye,' sez I,

'but *I* might take him at a fair price. What 's your fr'en' askin'?' 'He won't sell him to anybody but me,' sez Lummox; 'he 's a horror o' hoss-traders, anyway, and his price is more like a gift to a fr'en'.' 'What might that price be, ef it 's a fair question?' sez I, for the more I looked at the hoss the more I liked him. 'A hundred and fifty dollars,' sez he; 'but my fr'en' would ask *you* double that.' 'Could n't *you* and *me* make a trade?' sez I; 'I 'll exchange ye that roan mare, that 's worth two hundred, for this hoss and fifty dollars.' With that he drew himself up, and sez he: 'Mr. Borem,' sez he, 'I share my fr'en's opinion about hoss tradin', and I promised my mother I 'd never swap hosses. You ought to know me by this time.'"

"That 's so!" said Mrs. Bigsby; "I 'm wonderin' ye dared to ax him."

Dan'l passed his hand over his mouth, and continued: "'I dunno but you 're right, Lummox,' sez I; 'per'aps it 's jest as well as thar was n't *two* in the bank in that bizness.' But the more I looked at the hoss the more I hankered arter him. 'Look here,' sez I, 'I tell ye what I 'll do! I 'll *lend* you my hoss and you 'll *lend* me yourn. I 'll draw up a paper to that effect, and provide that in case o' accidents, ef I don't return you your hoss, I 'll agree to pay you a hundred and fifty dollars. You 'll give me the same kind o' paper about my hoss — with the proviso that you pay me two hundred for him!' 'Excuse me, Mr. Borem,' sez he, 'but that difference of fifty makes a hoss trade accordin' to my mind. It 's agin my principles to make such an agreement.'"

"An' he was right, Dan'l," said Mrs. Bigsby approvingly.

But Dan'l wiped his mouth again, leaving, however, a singular smile on it. "Well, ez I wanted that hoss, I jest thought and thought! I knew I could get two hundred

and fifty for him easy, and that Lummox did n't know anythin' of his valoo, and I finally agreed to make the swap even. 'What do you call him?' sez I. 'Pegasus,' sez he, — 'the poet's hoss, on account o' his golden mane,' sez he. That made me laff, for I never knew a poet ez could afford to hev a hoss, — much less one like that! But I said: 'I'll borry Pegasus o' you on those terms.' The next day I took the hoss to Jonesville; Lummox was right: he was n't *fast*, but, jest as I expected, he made a sensation! Folks crowded round him whenever I stopped; women followed him and children cried for him. I could hev sold him for three hundred without leavin' town! 'So ye call him Pegasus,' sez Doc Smith, grinnin'; 'I did n't know ye was subject to the divine afflatus, Dan'l.' 'I don't offen hev it,' sez I, 'but when I do I find a little straight gin does me good.' 'So did Byron,' sez he, chucklin'. But even if I had called him 'Beelzebub' the hull town would hev been jest as crazy over him. Well, as it was comin' on to rain I started jest after sundown for home. But it came ter blow, an' ter pour cats and dogs, an' I was nigh washed out o' the buggy, besides losin' my way and gettin' inter ditches and puddles, and I hed to stop at Staples' Half-Way House and put up for the night. In the mornin' I riz up early and goes into the stable-yard, and the first thing I sees was the 'ostler. 'I hope ye giv' my hoss a good scrub down,' I sez, 'as I told ye, for his color is that delicate the smallest spot shows. It 's a very rare color for a hoss.' 'I was hopin' it might be,' sez he. I was a little huffed at that, and I sez: 'It 's considered a very beautiful color.' 'Mebbe it is,' sez he, 'but I never cared much for fireworks.' 'What yer mean?' sez I. 'Look here, Squire!' sez he; 'I don't mind scourin' and rubbin' down a hoss that will stay the same color *twice*, but when he gets to playin' a kaladeoskope on me, I kick!' 'Trot him out,' sez I, beginnin' to feel queer. With that

he fetched out the hoss! For a minute I hed to ketch on to the fence to keep myself from fallin'. I swonny! ef he did n't look like a case of measles on top o' yaller fever — 'cept where the harness had touched him, and that was kinder stenciled out all over him. Thar was places whar the 'ostler had washed down to the foundation color, a kind o' chewed licorice! Then I knew that somebody had been sold terrible, and I reckoned it might be me! But I said nothin' to the 'ostler, and waited until dark, when I drove him over here, and put him in the stables, lettin' no one see him. In the mornin' Lummox comes to me, and sez he: 'I 'm glad to see you back,' sez he, 'for my conscience is troublin' me about that hoss agreement; it looks too much like a hoss trade,' sez he, 'and I 'm goin' to send the hoss back.' 'Mebbe your conscience,' sez I, 'may trouble you a little more ef you 'll step this way;' and with that I takes his arm and leads him round to the stable and brings out the hoss.

"Well, Lummox never changes ez much ez a hair, ez he puts up his eye-glasses. 'I 'm not good at what 's called "Pop'lar Art,"' sez he. 'Is it a chromo, or your own work?' sez he, critical like. 'It 's *your hoss*,' sez I. He looks at me a minute and then drors a paper from his pocket. 'This paper,' sez he in his quiet way, 'was drored up by you and is a covenant to return to me a yaller hoss with golden mane and tail — or a hundred and fifty dollars. Ez I don't see the hoss anywhere — mebbe you 've got the hundred and fifty dollars handy?' sez he. 'Suppose I had n't the money?' sez I. 'I should be obliged,' sez he in a kind o' pained, Christian-martyr way, 'ter sell *your* hoss for two hundred, and send the money to my fr'en'.' We looked at each other steddy for a minute and then I counts him out a hundred and fifty. He took the money sad-like and then sez: 'Mr. Borem,' sez he, 'this is a great morril lesson to us,' and went back to the

office. In the arternoon I called in an old hoss-dealer that I knew and shows him Pegasus. 'He wants renewin',' sez he. 'Wot 's that?' sez I. 'A few more bottles o' that British Blonde Hair Dye to set him up agin. That 's wot they allus do in the cirkis, whar he kem from.' Then I went back to the office and I took down my sign. 'What 's that you 're doin'?' sez Lummox, with a sickly kind o' smile. 'Are you goin' out o' the bizness?' 'No, I 'm only goin' to change that sign from "Dan'l Borem" to "Borem and Lummox,"' sez I. 'I 've concluded it 's cheaper for me to take you inter partnership now than to continue in this way, which would only end in your hevin' to take me in later. I preferred to *do it fust.*'"

VII

A rich man, and settled in business, John Lummox concluded that he would marry Mary Bike. With that farsighted logic which had always characterized him he reasoned that, having first met her on a "liner," he would find her again on one if he took passage to Europe. He did — but she was down on the passenger list as Mrs. Edwin Wraggles. The result of their interview was given to Mrs. Bigsby by Dan'l Borem in his own dialect.

"Ez far as I kin see, it was like the Deacon's Sunday hoss trade, bein' all 'Ef it wassent.' 'Ef ye was n't Mrs. Wraggles,' sez Lummox, sez he, 'I 'd be tellin' ye how I 've loved ye ever sence I first seed ye. Ef ye was n't Mrs. Wraggles, I 'd be squeezin' yer hand,' sez he; 'ef ye was n't Mrs. Wraggles, I 'd be askin' ye to marry me.' Then the gal ups and sez, sez she: 'But I *ain't* Mrs. Wraggles,' sez she; 'Mrs. Wraggles is my sister, and could n't come, so I 'm travelin' on her ticket, and that 's how my name is Wraggles on the passenger list.' 'But why did n't ye tell me so at once?' sez Lummox. 'This is an

episode o' protracted humor,' sez she, 'and *I'm* bound to have a show in it somehow!'"

"Well!" said Mrs. Bigsby breathlessly; "then he *did* marry her?"

"Darned ef I know. He never said so straight out — but that 's like Lummox."

STORIES THREE

BY R-DY-D K-PL-G

I

FOR SIMLA REASONS

SOME people say that improbable things don't necessarily happen in India — but these people never find improbabilities anywhere. This sounds clever, but you will at once perceive that it really means the opposite of what I intended to say. So we 'll drop it. What I am trying to tell you is that after Sparkley had that affair with Miss Millikens a singular change came over him. He grew abstracted and solitary, — holding dark séances with himself, — which was odd, as everybody knew he never cared a rap for the Millikens girl. It was even said that he was off his head — which is rhyme. But his reason was undoubtedly affected, for he had been heard to mutter incoherently at the club, and, strangest of all, to answer questions *that were never asked!* This was so awkward in that branch of the Civil Department of which he was a high official — where the rule was exactly the reverse — that he was presently invalided on full pay! Then he disappeared. Clever people said it was because the Department was afraid he had still much to answer for; stupid people simply envied him.

Mrs. Awksby, whom everybody knew had been the cause of breaking off the match, was now wild to know the reason of Sparkley's retirement. She attacked heaven and earth, and even went a step higher — to the Viceroy. At the viceregal ball I saw, behind the curtains of a window, her roll-

ing violet-blue eyes with a singular glitter in them. It was the reflection of the Viceroy's star, although the rest of his Excellency was hidden in the curtain. I heard him saying, "Come, now! really, now, you are — you know you are!" in reply to her cooing questioning.

Then she made a dash at me and captured me.

"What did you hear?"

"Nothing I should not have heard."

"Don't be like all the other men — you silly boy!" she answered. "I was only trying to find out something about Sparkley. And I will find it out, too," she said, clinching her thin little hand. "And what 's more," she added, turning on me suddenly, "*you* shall help me!"

"I?" I said in surprise.

"Don't pretend!" she said poutingly. "You 're too clever to believe he 's cut up over the Millikens. No — it 's something awful or — another woman! Now, if I knew as much of India as you do — and was n't a woman, and could go where I liked — I 'd go to Bungalooré and find him."

"Oh! You have his address?" I said.

"Certainly! What did you expect I was behind the curtain with the Viceroy for?" she said, opening her violet eyes innocently. "It 's Bungalooré — First Turning to the Right — At the End of the Passage."

Bungalooré — near Ghouli Pass — in the Jungle! I knew the place, a spot of dank pestilence and mystery. "You never could have gone there," I said.

"You do not know *what* I could do for a *friend*," she said sweetly, veiling her eyes in demure significance.

"Oh, come off the roof!" I said bluntly.

She could be obedient when it was necessary. She came off. Not without her revenge. "Try to remember you are not at school with the Stalkies," she said, and turned away.

I went to Bungalooré, — not on her account, but my own. If you don't know India, you won't know Bungalooré. It 's

all that and more. An egg dropped by a vulture, sat upon and addled by the Department. But I knew the house and walked boldly in. A lion walked out of one door as I came in at another. We did this two or three times — and found it amusing. A large cobra in the hall rose up, bowed as I passed, and respectfully removed his hood.

I found the poor old boy at the end of the passage. It might have been the passage between Calais and Dover, — he looked so green, so limp and dejected. I affected not to notice it, and threw myself in a chair.

He gazed at me for a moment and then said, "Did you hear what the chair was saying?"

It was an ordinary bamboo armchair, and had creaked after the usual fashion of bamboo chairs. I said so.

He cast his eyes to the ceiling. "He calls it 'creaking,'" he murmured. "No matter," he continued aloud, "its remark was not of a complimentary nature. It 's very difficult to get really polite furniture."

The man was evidently stark, staring mad. I still affected not to observe it, and asked him if that was why he left Simla.

"There were Simla reasons, certainly," he replied. "But you think I came here for solitude! *Solitude!*" he repeated, with a laugh. "Why, I hold daily conversations with any blessed thing in this house, from the veranda to the chimney-stack, with any stick of furniture, from the footstool to the towel-horse. I get more out of it than the gabble at the club. You look surprised. Listen! I took this thing up in my leisure hours in the Department. I had read much about the conversation of animals. I argued that if animals conversed, why should n't inanimate things communicate with each other? You cannot prove that animals don't converse — neither can you prove that inanimate objects *do not*. See?"

I was thunderstruck with the force of his logic.

"Of course," he continued, "there are degrees of intelligence, and that makes it difficult. For instance, a mahogany table would not talk like a rush-bottomed kitchen chair." He stopped suddenly, listened, and replied, "I really could n't say."

"I did n't speak," I said.

"I know *you* did n't. But your chair asked me 'how long that fool was going to stay.' I replied as you heard. Pray don't move — I intend to change that chair for one more accustomed to polite society. To continue: I perfected myself in the language, and it was awfully jolly at first. Whenever I went by train, I heard not only all the engines said, but what every blessed carriage thought, that joined in the conversation. If you chaps only knew what rot those whistles can get off! And as for the brakes, they can beat any mule driver in cursing. Then, after a time, it got rather monotonous, and I took a short sea trip for my health. But, by Jove, every blessed inch of the whole ship — from the screw to the bowsprit — had something to say, and the bad language used by the garboard strake when the ship rolled was something too awful! You don't happen to know what the garboard strake is, do you?"

"No," I replied.

"No more do I. That 's the dreadful thing about it. You 've got to listen to chaps that you don't know. Why, coming home on my bicycle the other day there was an awful row beween some infernal 'sprocket' and the 'ball bearings' of the machine, and I never knew before there were such things in the whole concern."

I thought I had got at his secret, and said carelessly: "Then I suppose this was the reason why you broke off your engagement with Miss Millikens?"

"Not at all," he said coolly; "nothing to do with it. That is quite another affair. It 's a very queer story; would you like to hear it?"

"By all means." I took out my note-book.

"You remember that night of the amateur theatricals, got up by the White Hussars, when the lights suddenly went out all over the house?"

"Yes," I replied, "I heard about it."

"Well, I had gone down there that evening with the determination of proposing to Mary Millikens the first chance that offered. She sat just in front of me, her sister Jane next, and her mother, smart Widow Millikens, — who was a bit larky on her own account, you remember, — the next on the bench. When the lights went out and the panic and tittering began, I saw my chance! I leaned forward, and in a voice that would just reach Mary's ear I said, 'I have long wished to tell you how my life is bound up with you, dear, and I never, never can be happy without you' — when just then there was a mighty big shove down my bench from the fellows beyond me, who were trying to get out. But I held on like grim death, and struggled back again into position, and went on: 'You 'll forgive my taking a chance like this, but I felt I could no longer conceal my love for you,' when I-'m blest if there was n't another shove, and though I 'd got hold of her little hand and had a kind of squeeze in return, I was drifted away again and had to fight my way back. But I managed to finish, and said, 'If the devotion of a lifetime will atone for this hurried avowal of my love for you, let me hope for a response;' and just then the infernal lights were turned on, and there I was holding the widow 's hand and she nestling on my shoulder, and the two girls in hysterics on the other side. You see, I never knew that they were shoved down on their bench every time, just as I was, and of course when I got back to where I was I 'd just skipped one of them each time! Yes, sir! I had made that proposal in *three* sections — a part to each girl, winding up with the mother! No explanation was possible, and I left

Simla next day. Naturally, it was n't a thing they could talk about, either!"

"Then you think Mrs. Awksby had nothing to do with it?" I said.

"Nothing — absolutely nothing. By the way, if you see that lady, you might tell her that I have possession of that brocade easy-chair which used to stand in the corner of her boudoir. You remember it, — faded white and yellow, with one of the casters off and a little frayed at the back, but rather soft-spoken and amiable? But of course you don't understand *that*. I bought it after she moved into her new bungalow."

"But why should I tell her that?" I asked in wonder.

"Nothing — except that I find it very amusing with its reminiscences of the company she used to entertain, and her confidences generally. Good-by — take care of the lion in the hall. He always couches on the left for a spring. Ta-ta!"

I hurried away. When I returned to Simla I told Mrs. Awksby of my discoveries, and spoke of the armchair.

I fancied she colored slightly, but quickly recovered.

"Dear old Sparkley," she said sweetly; "he *was* a champion liar!"

II

A PRIVATE'S HONOR

I had not seen Mulledwiney for several days. Knowing the man — this looked bad. So I dropped in on the Colonel. I found him in deep thought. This looked bad, too, for old Cockey Wax — as he was known to everybody in the Hill districts but himself — was n't given to thinking. I guessed the cause and told him so.

"Yes," he said wearily, "you are right! It 's the old story. Mulledwiney, Bleareyed, and Otherwise are at it

again, — drink followed by clink. Even now two corporals and a private are sitting on Mulledwiney's head to keep him quiet, and Bleareyed is chained to an elephant."

"Perhaps," I suggested, "you are unnecessarily severe."

"Do you really think so? Thank you *so* much! I am always glad to have a civilian's opinion on military matters — and *vice versa* — it broadens one so! And yet — am I severe? I am willing, for instance, to overlook their raid upon a native village, and the ransom they demanded for a native inspector! I have overlooked their taking the horses out of my carriage for their own use. I am content also to believe that my fowls meekly succumb to jungle fever and cholera. But there are some things I cannot ignore. The carrying off of the great god Vishnu from the Sacred Shrine at Ducidbad by The Three for the sake of the priceless opals in its eyes" —

"But I never heard of *that*," I interrupted eagerly. "Tell me."

"Ah!" said the Colonel playfully, "that — as you so often and so amusingly say — is 'Another Story'! Yet I would have overlooked the theft of the opals if they had not substituted two of the Queen's regimental buttons for the eyes of the god. This, while it did not deceive the ignorant priests, had a deep political and racial significance. You are aware, of course, that the great mutiny was occasioned by the issue of cartridges to the native troops greased with hog's fat — forbidden by their religion."

"But these three men could themselves alone quell a mutiny," I replied.

The Colonel grasped my hand warmly. "Thank you. So they could. I never thought of that." He looked relieved. For all that, he presently passed his hand over his forehead and nervously chewed his cheroot.

"There is something else," I said.

"You are right. There is. It is a secret. Promise

me it shall go no further — than the Press? Nay, swear that you will *keep* it for the Press!"

"I promise."

"Thank you *so* much. It is a matter of my own and Mulledwiney's. The fact is, we have had a *personal* difficulty." He paused, glanced around him, and continued in a low, agitated voice: "Yesterday I came upon him as he was sitting leaning against the barrack wall. In a spirit of playfulness — mere playfulness, I assure you, sir — I poked him lightly in the shoulder with my stick, saying 'Boo!' He turned — and I shall never forget the look he gave me."

"Good heavens!" I gasped, "you touched — absolutely *touched* — Mulledwiney?"

"Yes," he said hurriedly, "I knew what you would say; it was against the Queen's Regulations — and — there was his sensitive nature which shrinks from even a harsh word; but I did it, and of course he has me in his power."

"And you have touched him?" I repeated, — "touched his private honor!"

"Yes! But I shall atone for it! I have already arranged with him that we shall have it out between ourselves alone, in the jungle, stripped to the buff, with our fists — Queensberry rules! I haven't fought since I stood up against Spinks Major — you remember old Spinks, now of the Bombay Offensibles? — at Eton." And the old boy pluckily bared his skinny arm.

"It may be serious," I said.

"I have thought of that. I have a wife, several children, and an aged parent in England. If I fall, they must never know. You must invent a story for them. I have thought of cholera, but that is played out; you know we have already tried it on The Boy who was Thrown Away. Invent something quiet, peaceable, and respectable — as far removed from fighting as possible. What do you say to measles?"

"Not half bad," I returned.

"Measles let it be, then! Say I caught it from Wee Willie Winkie. You do not think it too incredible?" he added timidly.

"Not more than *your* story," I said.

He grasped my hand, struggling violently with his emotion. Then he struggled with me — and I left hurriedly. Poor old boy! The funeral was well attended, however, and no one knew the truth, not even myself.

III

JUNGLE FOLK

It was high noon of a warm summer's day when Moo Kow came down to the watering-place. Miaow, otherwise known as "Puskat," — the warmth-loving one, — was crouching on a limb that overhung the pool, sunning herself. Brer Rabbit — but that is Another Story by Another Person.

Three or four Gee Gees, already at the pool, moved away on the approach of Moo Kow.

"Why do ye stand aside?" said the Moo Kow.

"Why do you say 'ye'?" said the Gee Gees together.

"Because it 's more impressive than 'you.' Don't you know that all animals talk that way in English?" said the Moo Kow.

"And they also say 'thou,' and don't you forget it!" interrupted Miaow from the tree. "I learnt that from a Man Cub."

The animals were silent. They did not like Miaow's slang, and were jealous of her occasionally sitting on a Man Cub's lap. Once Dun-kee, a poor relation of the Gee Gees, had tried it on, disastrously — but that is also Another and a more Aged Story.

"We are ridden by The English — please to observe the

Capital letters," said Pi Böl, the leader of the Gee Gees proudly. "They are a mighty race who ride anything and everybody. D' ye mind that — I mean, look ye well to it!"

"What should they know of England who only England know?" said Miaow.

"Is that a conundrum?" asked the Moo Kow.

"No; it 's poetry," said the Miaow.

"I know England," said Pi Böl prancingly. "I used to go from the Bank to Islington three times a day — I mean," he added hurriedly, "before I became a screw — I should say, a screw-gun horse."

"And I," said the Moo Kow, "am terrible. When the young women and children in the village see me approach they fly shriekingly. My presence alone has scattered their sacred festival — The Sundés Kool Piknik. I strike terror to their inmost souls, and am more feared by them than even Kreep-mows, the insidious! And yet, behold! I have taken the place of the mothers of men, and I have nourished the mighty ones of the earth! But that," said the Moo Kow, turning her head aside bashfully — "that is Anudder Story."

A dead silence fell on the pool.

"And I," said Miaow, lifting up her voice, "I am the horror and haunter of the night season. When I pass like the night wind over the roofs of the houses men shudder in their beds and tremble. When they hear my voice as I creep stealthily along their balconies they cry to their gods for succor. They arise, and from their windows they offer me their priceless household treasures — the sacred vessels dedicated to their great god Shiv — which they call 'Shivin Mugs' — the Kloes Brösh, the Boo-jak, urging me to fly them! And yet," said Miaow mournfully, "it is but my love-song! Think ye what they would do if I were on the war-path."

Another dead silence fell on the pool. Then arose that strange, mysterious, indefinable Thing, known as "The Scent." The animals sniffed.

"It heralds the approach of the Stalkies — the most famous of British Skool Boaz," said the Moo Kow. "They have just placed a decaying guinea-pig, two white mice in an advanced state of decomposition, and a single slice of Limburger cheese in the bed of their tutor. They had previously skillfully diverted the drains so that they emptied into the drawing-room of the head-master. They have just burned down his house in an access of noble zeal, and are fighting among themselves for the spoil. Hark! do ye hear them?"

A wild medley of shrieks and howls had arisen, and an irregular mob of strange creatures swept out of the distance toward the pool. Some were like pygmies, some had bloody noses. Their talk consisted of feverish, breathless ejaculations, — a gibberish in which the words "rot," "oach," and "giddy" were preëminent. Some were exciting themselves by chewing a kind of "bhang" made from the plant called pappahmint; others had their faces streaked with djam.

"But who is this they are ducking in the pool?" asked Pi Böl.

"It is one who has foolishly and wantonly conceived that his parents have sent him here to study," said the Moo Kow; "but that is against the rules of the Stalkies, who accept study only as a punishment."

"Then these be surely the 'Bander Log' — the monkey folk — of whom the good Rhuddyidd has told us," said a Gee Gee — "the ones who have no purpose — and forget everything."

"Fool!" said the Moo Kow. "Know ye not that the great Rhuddyidd has said that the Stalkies become Major-Generals, V. C.'s, and C. B.'s of the English? Truly, they

are great. Look now; ye shall see one of the greatest traits of the English Stalky."

One of the pygmy Stalkies was offering a bun to a larger one, who hesitated, but took it coldly.

"Behold! it is one of the greatest traits of this mighty race not to show any emotion. He *would* take the bun — he *has* taken it! He is pleased — but he may not show it. Observe him eat."

The taller Stalky, after eating the bun, quietly kicked the giver, knocked off his hat, and turned away with a calm, immovable face.

"Good!" said the Moo Kow. "Ye would not dream that he was absolutely choking with grateful emotion?"

"We would not," said the animals.

"But why are they all running back the way they came?" asked Pi Böl.

"They are going back to punishment. Great is its power. Have ye not heard the gospel of Rhuddyidd the mighty? 'Force is everything! Gentleness won't wash, courtesy is deceitful. Politeness is foreign. Be ye beaten that ye may beat. Pass the kick on.'"

But here he was interrupted by the appearance of three soldiers who were approaching the watering-place.

"Ye are now," said the Moo Kow, "with the main guard. The first is Bleareyed, who carries a raven in a cage, which he has stolen from the wife of a deputy commissioner. He will paint the bird snow white and sell it as a dove to the same lady. The second is Otherwise, who is dragging a small garden engine, of which he has despoiled a native gardener, whom he has felled with a single blow. The third is Mulledwiney, swinging a cut-glass decanter of sherry which he has just snatched from the table of his colonel. Mulledwiney and Otherwise will play the engine upon Bleareyed, who is suffering from heat, apoplexy, and djim-djams."

The three soldiers seated themselves in the pool.

"They are going to tell awful war stories now," said the Moo Kow; "stories that are large and strong! Some people are shocked — others like 'em."

Then he that was called Mulledwiney told a story. In the middle of it Miaow got up from the limb of the tree, coughed slightly, and put her paw delicately over her mouth. "You must excuse me," she said faintly. "I am taken this way sometimes — and I have left my salts at home. Thanks! I can get down myself!" The next moment she had disappeared, but was heard coughing in the distance.

Mulledwiney winked at his companions and continued his story: —

"Wid that we wor in the thick av the foight. Whin I say 'thick' I mane it, sorr! We wor that jammed together, divil a bit cud we shoot or cut! At furrest, I had lashed two mushkits together wid the baynits out so, like a hay fork, and getting the haymaker's lift on thim, I just lifted two Paythians out — one an aych baynit — and passed 'em, aisy-like, over me head to the rear rank for them to finish. But what wid the blud gettin' into me ois, I was blinded, and the pressure kept incraysin' until me arrums was thrussed like a fowl to me sides, and sorra a bit cud I move but me jaws!"

"And bloomin' well you knew how to use them," said Otherwise.

"Thrue for you — though ye don't mane it!" said Mulledwiney, playfully tapping Otherwise on the head with a decanter till the cut-glass slowly shivered. "So, begorra! there wor nothing left for me to do but to *ate* thim! Wirra! but it was the crooel worruk."

"Excuse me, my lord," interrupted the gasping voice of Pi Böl as he began to back from the pool; "I am but a horse, I know, and being built in that way — naturally

have the stomach of one — yet, really, my lord, this — er" — And his voice was gone.

The next moment he had disappeared. Mulledwiney looked around with affected concern.

"Save us! But we 've cleaned out the Jungle! Sure, there 's not a baste left but ourselves!"

It was true. The watering-place was empty. Moo Kow, Miaow, and the Gee Gees had disappeared. Presently there was a booming crash and a long, deep rumbling among the distant hills. Then they knew they were near the old Moulmein Pagoda, and the dawn had come up like thunder out of China 'cross the bay. It always came up that way there. The strain was too great, and day was actually breaking.

"ZUT-SKI"

THE PROBLEM OF A WICKED FEME SOLE

BY M-R-E C-R-LLI

I

THE great pyramid towered up from the desert with its apex toward the moon which hung in the sky. For centuries it had stood thus, disdaining the aid of gods or man, being, as the Sphinx herself observed, able to stand up for itself. And this was no small praise from that sublime yet mysterious female who had seen the ages come and go, empires rise and fall, novelist succeed novelist, and who, for æons and cycles the cynosure and centre of admiration and men's idolatrous worship, had yet — wonderful for a woman — through it all kept her head, which now alone remained to survey calmly the present. Indeed, at that moment that magnificent and peaceful face seemed to have lost — with a few unimportant features — its usual expression of speculative wisdom and intense disdain; its mouth smiled, its left eyelid seemed to droop. As the opal tints of dawn deepened upon it, the eyelid seemed to droop lower, closed, and quickly recovered itself twice. You would have thought the Sphinx had winked.

Then arose a voice like a wind on the desert, — but really from the direction of the Nile, where a hired dahabiyeh lay moored to the bank, — "'Arry Axes! 'Arry Axes!" With it came also a flapping, trailing vision from the water, — the sacred Ibis itself, — and with wings aslant drifted mourn-

fully away to its own creaking echo: "K'raksis! K'raksis!" Again arose the weird voice: "'Arry Axes! Wotcher doin' of?" And again the Ibis croaked its wild refrain: "K'raksis! K'raksis!" Moonlight and the hour wove their own mystery (for which the author is not responsible), and the voice was heard no more. But when the full day sprang in glory over the desert, it illuminated the few remaining but sufficiently large features of the Sphinx with a burning saffron radiance! The Sphinx had indeed blushed!

II

It was the full season at Cairo. The wealth and fashion of Bayswater, South Kensington, and even the bosky Wood of the Evangelist had sent their latest luxury and style to flout the tombs of the past with the ghastly flippancy of to-day. The cheap-tripper was there, — the latest example of the Darwinian theory, — ape-like, flea and curio hunting! Shamelessly inquisitive and always hungry, what did he know of the Sphinx or the pyramids or the voice — and, for the matter of that, what did they know of him? And yet he was not half bad in comparison with the "swagger people," — these people who pretend to have lungs and what not, and instead of galloping on merry hunters through the frost and snow of Piccadilly and Park, instead of enjoying the roaring fires of piled logs in the evening, at the first approach of winter steal away to the Land of the Sun, and decline to die, like honest Britons, on British soil. And then they knew nothing of the Egyptians and are horrified at "bakshish," which they really ought to pay for the privilege of shocking the straight-limbed, naked-footed Arab in his single rough garment with their baggy, elephant-legged trousers! And they knew nothing of the mystic land of the old gods, filled with profound enigmas of the supernatural, dark secrets yet unexplored except in this

book. Well might the great Memnon murmur after this lapse of these thousand years, "They 're making me tired!"

Such was the blissful, self-satisfied ignorance of Sir Midas Pyle, or as Lord Fitz-Fulke, with his delightful imitation of the East London accent, called him, Sir "Myde His Pyle," as he leaned back on his divan in the Grand Cairo Hotel. He was the vulgar editor and proprietor of a vulgar London newspaper, and had brought his wife with him, who was vainly trying to marry off his faded daughters. There was to be a fancy-dress ball at the hotel that night, and Lady Pyle hoped that her girls, if properly disguised, might have a better chance. Here, too, was Lady Fitz-Fulke, whose mother was immortalized by Byron, — sixty if a day, yet still dressing youthfully, — who had sought the land of the Sphinx in the faint hope that in the contiguity of that lady she might pass for being young. Alaster McFeckless, a splendid young Scotchman, — already dressed as a Florentine sailor of the fifteenth century, which enabled him to show his magnificent calves quite as well as in his native Highland dress, and who had added with characteristic noble pride a sporran to his costume, — was lolling on another divan.

"Oh, those exquisite, those magnificent eyes of hers! Eh, sirs!" he murmured suddenly, as waking from a dream.

"Oh, damn her eyes!" said Lord Fitz-Fulke languidly. "Tell you what, old man, you 're just gone on that girl!"

"Ha!" roared McFeckless, springing to his feet; "ye will be using such language of the bonniest" —

"You will excuse me, gentlemen," said Sir Midas, — who hated scenes unless he had a trusted reporter with him, — "but I think it is time for me to go upstairs and put on my Windsor uniform, which I find exceedingly convenient for these mixed assemblies."

He withdrew, caressing his protuberant paunch with some dignity, as the two men glanced fiercely at each other.

In another moment they might have sprung at each other's throats. But luckily at this instant a curtain was pushed aside as if by some waiting listener, and a thin man entered, dressed in cap and gown, — which would have been simply academic but for his carrying in one hand behind him a bundle of birch twigs. It was Dr. Haustus Pilgrim, a noted London practitioner and specialist, dressed as "Ye Olde-fashioned Pedagogue." He was presumably spending his holiday on the Nile in a large dahabiyeh with a number of friends, among whom he counted the two momentary antagonists he had just interrupted; but those who knew the doctor's far-reaching knowledge and cryptic researches believed he had his own scientific motives.

The two men turned quickly as he entered; the angry light faded from their eyes, and an awed and respectful submission to the intruder took its place. He walked quietly toward them, put a lozenge in the mouth of one and felt the pulse of the other, gazing critically at both.

"We will be all right in a moment," he said, with professional confidence.

"I say!" said Fitz-Fulke, gazing at the doctor's costume; "you look dooced smart in those togs, don'tcherknow."

"They suit me," said the doctor, with a playful swish of his birch twigs, at which the two grave men shuddered. "But you were speaking of somebody's beautiful eyes."

"The Princess Zut-Ski's," returned McFeckless eagerly; "and this daft callant said" —

"He did n't like them," put in Fitz-Fulke promptly.

"Ha!" said the doctor sharply; "and why not, sir?" As Fitz-Fulke hesitated, he added brusquely: "There! Run away and play! I 've business with this young man," pointing to McFeckless.

As Fitz-Fulke escaped gladly from the room, the doctor turned to McFeckless. "It won't do, my boy. The Princess is not for you — you 'll only break your heart and

ruin your family over her! That 's my advice. Chuck her!"

"But I cannot," said McFeckless humbly. "Think of her weirdly beautiful eyes."

"I see," said the doctor meditatively; "sort of makes you feel creepy? Kind of all-overishness, eh? That 's like her. But whom have we here?"

He was staring at a striking figure that had just entered, closely followed by a crowd of admiring spectators. And, indeed, he seemed worthy of the homage. His magnificent form was closely attired in a velveteen jacket and trousers, with a singular display of pearl buttons along the seams that were absolutely lavish in their quantity; a hat adorned with feathers and roses completed his singularly picturesque equipment.

"Chevalier!" burst out McFeckless in breathless greeting.

"Ah, *mon ami!* What good chance?" returned the newcomer, rushing to him and kissing him on both cheeks, to the British horror of Sir Midas, who had followed. "Ah, but you are perfect!" he added, kissing his fingers in admiration of McFeckless's Florentine dress.

"But you? — what is this ravishing costume?" asked McFeckless, with a pang of jealousy. "You are god-like."

"It is the dress of what you call the Koster, a transplanted Phœnician tribe," answered the other. "They who knocked 'em in the road of Old Kent — know you not the legend?" As he spoke, he lifted his superb form to a warrior's height and gesture.

"But is this quite correct?" asked Fitz-Fulke of the doctor.

"Perfectly," said the doctor oracularly. "The renowned 'Arry Axes' — I beg his pardon," he interrupted himself hastily, "I mean the Chevalier — is perfect in his archæology and ethnology. The Koster is originally a Gypsy,

which is but a corruption of the word 'Egyptian,' and, if I mistake not, that gentleman is a lineal descendant."

"But he is called 'Chevalier,' and he speaks like a Frenchman," said Flossy.

"And, being a Frenchman, of course knows nothing outside of Paris," said Sir Midas.

"We are in the Land of Mystery," said the doctor gravely in a low voice. "You have heard of the Egyptian Hall and the Temple of Mystery?"

A shudder passed through many that were there; but the majority were following with wild adulation the superb Koster, who, with elbows slightly outward and hands turned inward, was passing toward the ballroom. McFeckless accompanied him with conflicting emotions. Would he see the incomparable Princess, who was lovelier and even still more a mystery than the Chevalier? Would she — terrible thought! — succumb to his perfections?

III

The Princess was already there, surrounded by a crowd of admirers, equal if not superior to those who were following the superb Chevalier. Indeed, they met almost as rivals! Their eyes sought each other in splendid competition.

The Chevalier turned away, dazzled and incoherent. "She is adorable, magnificent!" he gasped to McFeckless. "I love her on the instant! Behold, I am transported, ravished! Present me."

Indeed, as she stood there in a strange gauzy garment of exquisite colors, apparently shapeless, yet now and then revealing her perfect figure like a bather seen through undulating billows, she was lovely. Two wands were held in her taper fingers, whose mystery only added to the general curiosity, but whose weird and cabalistic uses were to be

seen later. Her magnificent face — strange in its beauty — was stranger still, since, with perfect archæological Egyptian correctness, she presented it only in profile, at whatever angle the spectator stood. But such a profile! The words of the great Poet-King rose to McFeckless's lips: "Her nose is as a tower that looketh toward Damascus."

He hesitated a moment, torn with love and jealousy, and then presented his friend. "You will fall in love with her — and then — you will fall also by my hand," he hissed in his rival's ear, and fled tumultuously.

"*Voulez-vous danser, mademoiselle?*" whispered the Chevalier in the perfect accent of the boulevardier.

"*Merci, beaucoup,*" she replied in the diplomatic courtesies of the Ambassadeurs.

They danced together, not once, but many times, to the admiration, the wonder, and envy of all; to the scandalized reprobation of a proper few. Who was she? Who was he? It was easy to answer the last question: the world rang with the reputation of "Chevalier the Artist." But she was still a mystery.

Perhaps they were not so to each other! He was gazing deliriously into her eyes. She was looking at him in disdainful curiosity. "I've seen you before somewhere, haven't I?" she said at last, with a crushing significance.

He shuddered, he knew not why, and passed his hand over his high forehead. "Yes, I go there very often," he replied vacantly. "But you, mademoiselle — you — I have met before?"

"Oh, ages, ages ago!" There was something weird in her emphasis.

"Ha!" said a voice near them, "I thought so!" It was the doctor, peering at them curiously. "And you both feel rather dazed and creepy?" He suddenly felt their pulses, lingering, however, as the Chevalier fancied, somewhat longer

than necessary over the lady's wrist and beautiful arm. He then put a small round box in the Chevalier's hand, saying, "One before each meal," and turning to the lady with caressing professional accents said, "We must wrap ourselves closely and endeavor to induce perspiration," and hurried away, dragging the Chevalier with him. When they reached a secluded corner, he said, "You had just now a kind of feeling, don't you know, as if you 'd sort of been there before, did n't you?"

"Yes, what you call a — preëxistence," said the Chevalier wonderingly.

"Yes; I have often observed that those who doubt a future state of existence have no hesitation in accepting a previous one," said the doctor dryly. "But come, I see from the way the crowd is hurrying that your divinity's number is up — I mean," he corrected himself hastily, "that she is probably dancing again."

"Aha! with him, the imbecile McFeckless?" gasped the Chevalier.

"No, alone."

She was indeed alone, in the centre of the ballroom — with outstretched arms revolving in an occult, weird, dreamy, mystic, druidical, cabalistic circle. They now for the first time perceived the meaning of those strange wands which appeared to be attached to the many folds of her diaphanous skirts and involved her in a fleecy, whirling cloud. Yet in the wild convolutions of her garments and the mad gyrations of her figure, her face was upturned with the seraphic intensity of a devotee, and her lips parted as with the impassioned appeal for "Light! more light!" And the appeal was answered. A flood of blue, crimson, yellow, and green radiance was alternately poured upon her from the black box of a mysterious Nubian slave in the gallery. The effect was marvelous; at one moment she appeared as a martyr in a sheet of flame, at another as an

angel wrapped in white and muffled purity, and again as a nymph of the cerulean sea, and then suddenly a cloud of darkness seemed to descend upon her, through which for an instant her figure, as immaculate and perfect as a marble statue, showed distinctly — then the light went out and she vanished!

The whole assembly burst into a rapturous cry. Even the common Arab attendants who were peeping in at the doors raised their melodious native cry, "Alloe, Fullah! Alloe, Fullah!" again and again.

A shocked silence followed. Then the voice of Sir Midas Pyle was heard addressing Dr. Haustus Pilgrim: —

"May we not presume, sir, that what we have just seen is not unlike that remarkable exhibition when I was pained to meet you one evening at the Alhambra?"

The doctor coughed slightly. "The Alhambra — ah, yes! — you — er — refer, I presume, to Granada and the Land of the Moor, where we last met. The music and dance are both distinctly Moorish — which, after all, is akin to the Egyptian. I am gratified indeed that your memory should be so retentive and your archæological comparison so accurate. But see! the ladies are retiring. Let us follow."

IV

The intoxication produced by the performance of the Princess naturally had its reaction. The British moral soul, startled out of its hypocrisy the night before, demanded the bitter beer of self-consciousness and remorse the next morning. The ladies were now openly shocked at what they had secretly envied. Lady Pyle was, however, propitiated by the doctor's assurance that the Princess was a friend of Lady Fitz-Fulke, who had promised to lend her youthful age and aristocratic prestige to the return ball which the Princess had determined to give at her own home.

"Still, I think the Princess open to criticism," said Sir Midas oracularly.

"Damn all criticism and critics!" burst out McFeckless, with the noble frankness of a passionate and yet unfettered soul. Sir Midas, who employed critics in his business, as he did other base and ignoble slaves, drew up himself and his paunch and walked away.

The Chevalier cast a superb look at McFeckless. "*Voilà!* Regard me well! I shall seek out this Princess when she is with herself! Alone; *comprenez?* I shall seek her at her hotel in the Egyptian Hall. Ha! ha! I shall seek Zut-Ski! Zut!" And he made that rapid, yet graceful motion of his palm against his thigh known only to the true Parisian.

"It 's a rum hole where she lives, and nobody gets a sight of her," said Flossy. "It 's like a beastly family vault, don't you know, outside, and there 's a kind of nigger doorkeeper that visés you and chucks you out if you have n't the straight tip. I 'll show you the way, if you like."

"*Allons, en avant!*" said the Chevalier gayly. "I precipitate myself there on the instant."

"Remember!" hissed McFeckless, grasping his arm, "you shall account to me!"

"*Bien!*" said the Chevalier, shaking him off lightly. "All a-r-r-right." Then, in that incomparable baritone, which had so often enthralled thousands, he moved away, trolling the first verse of the Princess's own faint, sweet, sad song of the "Lotus Lily," that thrilled McFeckless even through the Chevalier's marked French accent: —

"Oh, a hard zing to get is ze Lotus Lillee!
She lif in ze swamp — in ze watair chillee;
She make your foot wet — and you look sillee,
But you buy her for sixpence in Piccadillee!"

In half an hour the two men reached the remote suburb where the Princess lived, a gloomy, windowless building. Pausing under a low archway over which in Egyptian characters appeared the faded legend, "Sta Ged Oor," they found a Nubian slave blocking the dim entrance.

"I leave you here," said Flossy hurriedly, "as even I left once before — only then I was lightly assisted by his sandaled foot," he added, rubbing himself thoughtfully. "But better luck to you."

As his companion retreated swiftly, the Chevalier turned to the slave and would have passed in, but the man stopped him. "Got a pass, boss?"

"No," said the Chevalier.

The man looked at him keenly. "Oh, I see! one of de profesh."

The Chevalier nodded haughtily. The man preceded him by devious, narrow ways and dark staircases, coming abruptly upon a small apartment where the Princess sat on a low divan. A single lamp inclosed in an ominous wire cage flared above her. Strange things lay about the floor and shelves, and from another door he could see hideous masks, frightful heads, and disproportionate faces. He shuddered slightly, but recovered himself and fell on his knees before her.

"I lofe you," he said madly. "I have always lofed you!"

"For how long?" she asked, with a strange smile.

He covertly consulted his shirt-cuff. "For tree tousand fife hundred and sixty-two years," he said rapidly.

She looked at him disdainfully. "The doctor has been putting you up to that! It won't wash! I don't refer to your shirt-cuff," she added, with deep satire.

"Adorable one!" he broke out passionately, attempting to embrace her, "I have come to take you."

Without moving, she touched a knob in the wall. A trap-door beyond him sank, and out of the bowels of the

earth leaped three indescribable demons. Then, rising, she took a cake of chalk from the table and, drawing a mystic half circle on the floor, returned to the divan, lit a cigarette, and leaning comfortably back, said in a low, monotonous voice, "Advance one foot within that magic line, and on that head, although it wore a crown, I launch the curse of Rome."

"I — only wanted to take you — with a kodak," he said, with a light laugh to conceal his confusion, as he produced the instrument from his coat-tail pocket.

"Not with that cheap box," she said, rising with magnificent disdain. "Come again with a decent instrument — and perhaps" — Then, lightly humming in a pure contralto, "I 've been photographed like this — I 've been photographed like that," she summoned the slave to conduct him back, and vanished through a canvas screen, which nevertheless seemed to the dazed Chevalier to be the stony front of the pyramids.

V

"And you saw her?" said the doctor in French.

"Yes; but the three-thousand-year gag did not work! She spotted you, *cher ami*, on the instant. And she would n't let me take her with my kodak."

The doctor looked grave. "I see," he mused thoughtfully. "You must have my camera, a larger one and more bulky, perhaps, to carry; but she will not object to that — she who has stood for full lengths. I will give you some private instructions."

"But, *cher* doctor, this previous-existence idea — at what do you arrive?"

"There is much to say for it," said the doctor oracularly. "It has survived in the belief of all ages. Who can tell? That some men in a previous existence may have been goats

or apes," continued the doctor, looking at him curiously, "does not seem improbable! From the time of Pythagoras we have known that; but that the individual as an individual ego has been remanded or projected, has harked back or anticipated himself, is, we may say, with our powers of apperception, — that is, the perception that we are perceiving, — is " —

But the Chevalier had fled.

"No matter," said the doctor, "I will see McFeckless." He did. He found him gloomy, distraught, baleful. He felt his pulse. "The mixture as before," he said briefly, "and a little innocent diversion. There is an Aunt Sally on the esplanade — two throws for a penny. It will do you good. Think no more of this woman! Listen, — I wish you well; your family have always been good patients of mine. Marry some good Scotch girl; I know one with fifty thousand pounds. Let the Princess go!"

"To him — never! I will marry her! Yet," he murmured softly to himself, "feefty thousand pun' is nae small sum. Ay! Not that I care for siller — but feefty thousand pun'! Eh, sirs!"

VI

Dr. Haustus knew that the Chevalier had again visited the Princess, although he had kept the visit a secret, — and indeed was himself invisible for a day or two afterwards. At last the doctor's curiosity induced him to visit the Chevalier's apartment. Entering, he was surprised — even in that Land of Mystery — to find the room profoundly dark, smelling of Eastern drugs, and the Chevalier sitting before a large plate of glass which he was examining by the aid of a lurid ruby lamp, — the only light in the weird gloom. His face was pale and distraught, his locks were disheveled.

"*Voilà!*" he said. "*Mon Dieu!* It is my third attempt. Always the same — hideous, monstrous, unearthly! It is she, and yet it is not she!"

The doctor, professional man as he was and inured to such spectacles, was startled! The plate before him showed the Princess's face in all its beautiful contour, but only dimly veiling a ghastly death's-head below. There was the whole bony structure of the head and the eyeless sockets; even the graceful, swan-like neck showed the articulated vertebral column that supported it in all its hideous reality. The beautiful shoulders were there, dimly as in a dream — but beneath was the empty clavicle, the knotty joint, the hollow sternum, and the ribs of a skeleton half length!

The doctor's voice broke the silence. "My friend," he said dryly, "you see only the truth! You see what she really is, this peerless Princess of yours. You see her as she is to-day, and you see her kinship to the bones that have lain for centuries in yonder pyramid. Yet they were once as fair as this, and this was as fair as they — in effect the same! You that have madly, impiously adored her superficial beauty, the mere dust of to-morrow, let this be a warning to you! You that have no soul to speak of, let that suffice you! Take her and be happy. Adieu!"

Yet, as he passed out of the fitting, tomb-like gloom of the apartment and descended the stairs, he murmured to himself: "Odd that I should have lent him my camera with the Röntgen-ray attachment still on. No matter! It is not the first time that the Princess has appeared in two parts the same evening."

VII

In spite of envy, jealousy, and malice, a certain curiosity greater than all these drew everybody to the Princess Zut-Ski's ball. Lady Fitz-Fulke was there in virgin white.

looking more youthful than ever, in spite of her sixty-five years and the card labeled "Fresh Paint" which somebody had playfully placed upon her enameled shoulder. The McFecklesses, the Pyles, Flossy, the doctor, and the Chevalier — looking still anxious — were in attendance.

The mysterious Nubian doorkeeper admitted the guests through the same narrow passages, much to the disgust of Lady Pyle and the discomfiture of her paunchy husband; but on reaching a large circular interior hall, a greater surprise was in store for them. It was found that the only entrance to the body of the hall was along a narrow ledge against the bare wall some distance from the floor, which obliged the guests to walk slowly, in single file, along this precarious strip, giving them the attitudes of an Egyptian frieze, which was suggested in the original plaster above them. It is needless to say that, while the effect was ingenious and striking from the centre of the room, where the Princess stood with a few personal friends, it was exceedingly uncomfortable to the figures themselves, in their enforced march along the ledge, — especially a figure of Sir Midas Pyle's proportions. Suddenly an exclamation broke from the doctor.

"Do you see," he said to the Princess, pointing to the figure of the Chevalier, who was filing along with his sinewy hands slightly turned inward, "how surprisingly like he is to the first attendant on the king in the real frieze above? And that," added the doctor, "was none other than 'Arry Axes, the Egyptian you are always thinking of." And he peered curiously at her.

"Goodness me!" murmured the Princess, in an Arabic much more soft and fluent than the original gum. "So he does — look like him."

"And do you know you look like him, too? Would you mind taking a walk around together?"

They did, amid the acclamations of the crowd. The

likeness was perfect. The Princess, however, was quite white as she eagerly rejoined the doctor.

"And this means?" — she hissed in a low whisper.

"That he is the real 'Arry Axes! Hush, not a word now! We join the dahabiyeh to-night. At daybreak you will meet him at the fourth angle of the pyramid, first turning from the Nile!"

VIII

The crescent moon hung again over the apex of the Great Pyramid, like a silver cutting from the rosy nail of a houri. The Sphinx — mighty guesser of riddles, reader of rebuses, and universal solver of missing words — looked over the unfathomable desert and these few pages, with the worried, hopeless expression of one who is obliged at last to give it up. And then the wailing voice of a woman, toiling up the steep steps of the pyramid, was heard above the creaking of the Ibis: "'Arry Axes! Where are you? Wait for me."

"*J'y suis,*" said a voice from the very summit of the stupendous granite bulk, "yet I cannot reach it."

And in that faint light the figure of a man was seen, lifting his arms wildly toward the moon.

"'Arry Axes," persisted the voice, drifting higher, "wait for me; we are pursued."

And indeed it was true. A band of Nubians, headed by the doctor, was already swarming like ants up the pyramid, and the unhappy pair were secured. And when the sun rose, it was upon the white sails of the dahabiyeh, the vacant pyramid, and the slumbering Sphinx.

There was great excitement at the Cairo Hotel the next morning. The Princess and the Chevalier had disappeared, and with them Alaster McFeckless, Lady Fitz-Fulke, the

doctor, and even his dahabiyeh! A thousand rumors had been in circulation. Sir Midas Pyle looked up from the "Times" with his usual I-told-you-so expression.

"It is the most extraordinary thing, don'tcherknow," said Fitz-Fulke. "It seems that Dr. Haustus Pilgrim was here professionally — as a nerve specialist — in the treatment of hallucinations produced by neurotic conditions, you know."

"A mad doctor, here!" gasped Sir Midas.

"Yes. The Princess, the Chevalier, McFeckless, and even my mother were all patients of his on the dahabiyeh. He believed, don'tcherknow, in humoring them and letting them follow out their cranks, under his management. The Princess was a music-hall artist who imagined she was a dead and gone Egyptian Princess; and the queerest of all, 'Arry Axes was also a music-hall singer who imagined himself Chevalier, — you know, the great Koster artist, — and that 's how we took him for a Frenchman. McFeckless and my poor old mother were the only ones with any real rank and position — but you know what a beastly bounder Mac was, and the poor mater *did* overdo the youthful! We never called the doctor in until the day she wanted to go to a swell ball in London as Little Red Riding-Hood. But the doctor writes me that the experiment was a success, and they 'll be all right when they get back to London."

"Then, it seems, sir, that you and I were the only sane ones here," said Sir Midas furiously.

"Really it 's as much as I can do to be certain about myself, old chappie," said Fitz-Fulke, turning away.

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